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LESSONS
ON
THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL,

Drawn from the Acts and the Epistles.

BY
EDWARD H: HALL.

FOURTH EDITION.

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P R E F A C E.

As the life of St. Paul is a subject which belongs to the older rather than the younger classes of our Sunday Schools, I have prepared this manual with such classes in view. I trust it will serve as an introduction to Allen's admirable "Outline of Christian History." The number of chapters has been determined by the natural divisions of the subject, which I have preferred to preserve; but as the material in most of them is more than enough for a single lesson, especially in the brief time allowed for our ordinary Sunday-school sessions, I have broken each into two or three lessons, and recommend that they should be so used. This will make a course of thirty-one lessons.

The text, as in my previous manual,¹ is intended for the use of the scholars; the references are to guide the teachers in their further studies of the subject. I trust that most of our Sunday-school libraries contain one or more of the English works referred to. Unfortunately, none of these books can be recommended for the present purpose without qualification; but of those here given, Farrar's "Life and Work of St. Paul" is by far the best for the use of teachers. The questions are few, and are limited pretty strictly

¹ First Lessons on the Bible.

to the historical matter contained in the text; I trust, however, that a larger range will be taken by the teachers, and should be sorry to have it supposed that no questions are to be asked but those here given.

One word as to the chronology here adopted. It should be understood by both teachers and scholars that all New Testament dates are, within certain limits, conjectural. There is no clew in Gospels, Acts, or Epistles, to the exact year of any single event or writing. The only thing to be done, in such a work as this, is to determine, on the best evidence obtainable, some one date, and arrange the entire history in accordance with that. Having adopted A.D. 33 as the year of Christ's crucifixion, and A.D. 34 as that of Paul's conversion, the other dates are determined by these; not as certainly correct, but as on the whole the most probable.

I hope each class will have a map in its hands through all its lessons. Excellent maps can be found in many of the books referred to in the lists, especially in Renan's "St. Paul," a valuable work for constant reference. There are plenty of cheap hand-maps purporting to give the travels of St. Paul, but I have been unable to find any that are accurate. The best that I have seen is one published by the American Tract Society, 150 Nassau street, New York, costing twenty-five cents, and entitled, "Map showing the Missionary Tours of the Apostle Paul."

E. H. H.

CAMBRIDGE, May 16, 1885.

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LESSONS ON THE LIFE OF ST. PAUL.

I.

THE APOSTLES AT JERUSALEM.

A.D. 33-34. Acts i.-vii.

AFTER the death of Jesus¹ his disciples gathered together in Jerusalem, in the full expectation that he was soon to return to earth and establish his kingdom. The book of Acts, our only authority for this period, tells us far less than we would like to know of these early days, but the little that it gives is exceedingly interesting. It shows us this little band of disciples drawn into a circle by themselves, through their love for their great leader, and their belief that he was soon to return as their Messiah. The narrative tells us how they held all their property in common, the richer members selling their goods and distributing to all "as every man had need;" how they went from house to house breaking bread and eating meat together; and how, in perfect mutual confidence and sympathy, they lived together as one great family.² It is plain that they did not at first form any separate church, or observe any new forms of worship. Being all of them Jews, having received from Jesus no directions to withdraw from their fellow-worshippers, and regarding him as the Messiah of the Jews whom the whole nation had so long awaited, they kept up, for some time, all the Jewish customs. "They continued daily with one accord in the temple,"³ they observed Sabbath and feast-

¹ It is impossible to determine, within four or five years, the date of the crucifixion. I have assumed A.D. 33, as on the whole the most probable.

² Acts ii. 42-46; iv. 32-35.

³ Acts ii. 46.

days¹ and all the Jewish hours of prayer,² they "abstained from meats offered to idols, and from blood and from things strangled,"³ they even held, for a long time, to such purely Mosaic rites as circumcision.⁴ We must think of them at this time as a little band of disciples, trying to persuade all their fellow-Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was the Messiah, but still holding the popular idea as to what the "kingdom of heaven" was to be,⁵ and quite unaware that the followers of Jesus need ever separate themselves from the mother church.

As there was no distinct church, so there were, of course, no church-officials at first; though the twelve apostles, who had been nearest Jesus during his life, naturally became leaders of the movement after his death. The book of Acts begins by telling us how the vacancy in the ranks of the Twelve caused by the death of Judas was filled by lot.⁶ Yet the twelve apostles, as a whole, take by no means the prominent part in affairs which we should expect of them, as all but two disappear at once from history, and are never heard of again except in the later traditions of the church. After their names are once given in the first chapter of Acts, only Peter and John are ever mentioned again. Peter shows the same characteristics, the same bold and generous impulses, but also the same lack of real courage or persistency,⁷ after his Master's death as before; and although he takes a conspicuous part in the early narrative of Acts, he fails to show any of the higher qualities of leadership. John is also somewhat prominent at the very first,⁸ but afterwards no mention is made of him, and we know nothing with certainty of his later history. According to a tradition of the early church, whose source we cannot trace, John was banished to the island of Patmos during a persecution of the Emperor Domitian⁹ and afterwards governed the churches of Asia Minor, living in Ephesus till the times of Trajan.¹⁰ He is

¹ Acts xiii. 42, 44; xvii. 2; ii. 1; xx. 16; xx. 6.

² Acts iii. 1; x. 9.

³ Acts x. 14; xv. 29.

⁴ Acts xv. 1; xvi. 3.

⁵ Acts iii. 20, 21; 1 Thess. iv. 15-17.

⁶ Acts i. 15-26.

⁷ Acts xv. 10; Gal. ii. 11-13.

⁸ Acts iii., iv., viii. 14-25.

⁹ A.D. 81-96.

¹⁰ Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. iii. 18, 20, 23. 39.

said also, by similar traditions, to have worn a golden frontlet, in imitation of that worn by the high-priests, and to have distinguished himself through his life by his zeal for Jewish rites.¹ Other accounts tell of his going into a stronghold of robbers, in his old age, to rescue a youth who had fallen into evil ways,² and of his being carried into church, day after day, in the arms of his disciples, to repeat the words, " Little children, love one another."³ By another old tradition, which can be traced back to the second century, the fourth Gospel and the book of Revelation are attributed to John.

As to the rest of the Twelve, except for the mention of the death of James, the Scriptures, as I have said, are silent, and what accounts remain are purely legendary. Andrew, the brother of Peter, is said to have preached the gospel in the regions around the Euxine Sea, and afterwards to have gone to Greece, where he was crucified at the order of the Roman proconsul. He was bound to his cross, which was in the form of an X, by cords, and lingered three days, preaching to the end.

James, the brother of John, sometimes called James the Greater, is the only one whose death is mentioned in the Bible narrative. He was killed by Herod at a very early period.⁴ According to church traditions, he preached during his life-time in Spain, and after his death appeared repeatedly to lead the Spanish armies against the Moors. In Spanish legends he figures as a great military saint, named Santiago, his father Zebedee being exalted into a distinguished Galilæan baron, who fished upon Lake Gennesareth as an elegant pastime.

Philip, after preaching twenty years in Scythia and Phrygia, was crucified, and stoned when on the cross. Bartholomew travelled into India, and was afterwards flayed and crucified. Thomas, called Didymus, also travelled into India, baptized the Three Wise Men of the East, and suffered martyrdom there. Matthew went into Egypt and Ethiopia, where he overcame

¹ Eusebius, iii. 31, 28.

² Eusebius, iii. 23.

³ Jerome, in his Comm. on Galatians.

⁴ Acts xii. 2.

magicians, and was afterwards killed by the sword. He is said also to have written a "history in the Hebrew dialect," which has been lost, but which may have been the basis of our first Gospel.¹ James the son of Alphæus, or James the Less,² seems to be wholly unknown both to history and to legend; though his name has been confused, especially in art, with James the brother of Jesus, whom Paul mentions as leader of the disciples at Jerusalem,³ and who is often spoken of in Acts,⁴ but who did not belong to the Twelve. The others are too unimportant to be mentioned. Indeed, the New Testament narratives do not quite agree as to who they were; a Lebbæus being alluded to in one place,⁵ a Judas the brother of James in another,⁶ and a Nathaniel in another.⁷

More prominent than any of these, as I have said, was still a third James, the brother of Jesus.⁸ If the little band of disciples had any leader in those early days it was he, as we judge from Paul's allusions to him,⁹ and the prominent place given to him in the narrative of Acts.¹⁰ Not having followed Jesus, or believed in him during his life,¹¹ he seems to have joined the disciples immediately after their Master's death,¹² and was probably looked up to by the rest, partly because of his near relationship with the Master, partly perhaps because of his extreme religious zeal. According to all accounts, he had been noted from his earliest days for his scrupulous observance of Jewish rites. The old traditions declare that he drank no wine and ate no animal food, that no razor ever touched his head, that he always wore linen garments, and that his knees became as hard as camels' from his constant kneeling in the temple.¹³ Whatever the truth of these legends, the New Testament accounts show that he was always active in preserving the Jewish observances, and that if his influence had prevailed, the "Gentiles" would

¹ Eusebius, iii. 39.

² Mark xv. 40.

³ Gal. i. 19; ii. 9, 12.

⁴ Acts xii. 17; xv. 13; xxi. 18.

⁵ Matt. x. 3.

⁶ Luke vi. 16; Acts i. 13.

⁷ John xxi. 2.

⁸ Gal. i. 19; Eusebius, ii. 1.

⁹ Gal. i. 19; ii. 9, 12.

¹⁰ Acts xii. 7; xv. 13; xxi. 18.

¹¹ Matt. xiii. 55; John vii. 5.

¹² Acts i. 14.

¹³ Eusebius, ii. 23.

hardly have been permitted to take part in the new religious movement, if indeed Christianity had ever become a distinct religion at all. He is said to have been stoned to death about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem.¹ In later days, when the Christian church had bishops over it, James was claimed as first bishop of Jerusalem.²

At first, this little gathering of the disciples seems to have attracted no attention in Jerusalem; but as their numbers increased, and the name of Jesus was openly proclaimed as the Christ, the Jewish leaders became alarmed, and forbade the apostles to preach in that name.³ The first serious trouble, however, arose when certain foreign-born Jews, less strict than the others in their adhesion to the Jewish law, began to become prominent among them. Little jealousies having arisen because of these "Grecians" or "Hellenists," as they were called, seven men were selected to look out especially for their interests in the daily distribution of food.⁴

This division among the disciples once having appeared, no doubt further differences of opinion on religious matters followed. In any case, it was in one of these so-called Grecian synagogues⁵ that the first public controversy arose between the disciples of Jesus and the Jews. This was brought about by Stephen, one of the Seven already alluded to, who seems to have been of a different stamp from his companions, and to have felt more deeply than any of them what the final result of the new gospel must be. Possibly he had in mind some of Jesus' words which the others had forgotten,⁶ and so intimated that Jesus of Nazareth would in the end overthrow the temple and establish new religious customs.⁷ This, of course, seemed to the scribes and elders sheer blasphemy, and Stephen was finally charged with speaking "blasphemous words against Moses and against God."⁸ He was brought before the

¹ Josephus, *Antiquities*, xx. 9, 1; Eusebius, ii. 23.

² Compare Farrar's *Early Days of Christianity*, i. 483-554.

³ Acts v. 40. ⁴ Acts vi. 1-6.

⁵ Acts vi. 9.

⁶ Compare Matt. viii. 11; xii. 8, 12; John iv. 21.

⁷ Acts vi. 14.

⁸ Acts vi. 11.

Jewish Council, where he defended himself with great eloquence, reaffirming the very statements of which he was accused: "Howbeit, the most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands."¹ For this he was condemned to death and stoned; — dying heroically, as the first martyr to the cause of Christian truth. "And he kneeled down and cried with a loud voice, 'Lord, lay not this sin to their charge;' and when he had said this he fell asleep."²

The persecution which followed this tragic event seemed at the time a fatal blow to the new faith. In the end, however, it proved to be the first step towards the separation of Christianity from Judaism, and its establishment as an independent religion.

REFERENCES.

Farrar's Life and Work of St. Paul, vol. i.; Renan's *Les Apôtres*, and L'Antechrist (Appendix); Hase's History of the Christian Church (The Apostolic Church); Baur's *Paulus*, vol. i.; Bible for Learners, iii. 481-519; Keim's *Jesus of Nazara*, i. 211-220 (Accounts of John); Mrs. Jameson's Sacred and Legendary Art, vol. i. (Accounts of the Apostles); Farrar's Early Days of Christianity, vol. ii.; Frothingham's Cradle of the Christ; Allen's Fragments of Christian History.

QUESTIONS.

1. What date does this manual give for the death of Jesus? 2. How accurately can any of the New Testament dates be determined? (See Preface.) 3. Where did the disciples gather after Jesus' death, and in what hope? 4. How do you understand their expectation as to Jesus' coming? 5. Did they withdraw at once from the Jewish church, and if not, why? 6. Describe their mode of life and worship at first. 7. Had they any distinct church organization? 8. Who were their leaders? 9. How important a position did the Twelve Apostles take? 10. What part did Peter take? 11. How much is known about John?

¹ Acts vii. 48.

² Acts vii. 60.

12. What is known of the rest of the Twelve Apostles ? 13. What three Jameses are mentioned in the New Testament, and which of these was prominent at Jerusalem ? 14. What can you tell about him ? 15. What division arose among the disciples, and to what appointment did it lead ? (Acts vi.) 16. What led to the first persecution ? 17. How do you understand the charge against Stephen (vi. 14), and of what words of Jesus does it remind you ? 18. Why should Stephen have aroused greater hostility than the other disciples ? 19. Describe Stephen's trial and death. 20. What seems to you the bearing of this incident upon the early Christian history ?

II.

SAUL OF TARSUS.

AMONG those who took part in the stoning of Stephen, a young man is mentioned who afterwards became the most interesting personage among the followers of Jesus. This was Saul of Tarsus.¹ Tarsus was a city of Cilicia, in the southeast corner of Asia Minor, one of the most unfrequented regions of the Mediterranean coast. The wild mountains just to the west of it had always been a favorite lurking-place for pirates, until they were exterminated, less than a century before this time,² by Pompey the Great. Tarsus itself was situated in a rich plain between the mountains and the sea ; and being just at the foot of a steep mountain pass called the “Cilician Gates,” over which the highway from central Asia Minor ran, had been long a city of great commercial importance. Its chief industry seems to have been the manufacture of a coarse dark sail-cloth made from the long hair of the Cilician goats, and so known among the Romans as *cilicium*. It was used very much as duck or canvas is used to-day, for sailors’ garments, sails, and tents. The river Cydnus which connected Tarsus with the sea served, like the Hudson and many of our New England rivers, to float great quantities of lumber from the mountains to the sea, while ships from other Mediterranean ports discharged their cargoes at Tarsus, to be carried inland through the Cilician Gates. Some of the coins of Tarsus, bearing the river Cydnus as a female figure surrounded by bales of merchandise, or Mercury holding a purse in his hand, show how important its commerce was.³ It was through the Cilician Gates that Alexander marched to his great conquests in Asia, nearly perishing from a bath in the cold waters of the river Cydnus ; and it was at Issus, just east of Tarsus, that the great battle was fought which decided the fate of his campaign.

¹ Acts vii. 58.

² B.C. 66 or 67.

³ Hausrath’s Paulus, p. 6.

It was at Tarsus, on a less heroic occasion, where Marc Anthony awaited the coming of Cleopatra, whom Plutarch describes as sailing up the Cydnus in a gilded galley with purple sails and silver oars, in which she reclined in the character of Venus, under an embroidered canopy.¹ Just before this time, probably under Augustus, Tarsus had become a free city of the Roman Empire, and so was exempted from imperial taxes and the support of a Roman garrison, and was allowed to have magistrates of its own.

All these provincial centres caught something of the Greek culture of the day, and Tarsus, however remote its situation, was no exception to this rule. One of the ancient writers speaks in strong terms of the zeal for philosophy and general intellectual activity which prevailed in Tarsus, so that we must think of it as a city in which the Greek language and literature were familiar among the mercantile and educated classes, while the bulk of the population spoke their native tongue and practised still the old idolatrous rites.² The Jewish element, as in all commercial cities, was very large, and showed its zeal for the national faith by maintaining, in connection with other provincials, a synagogue in Jerusalem,³ possibly the very one in which Stephen carried on the dispute which led to his death.

In this Jewish quarter of a Roman provincial city, Saul spent his earlier years. Of his family we only know that they were Jews of the stricter sort;⁴ that his father was a Roman citizen,⁵ and that Saul himself was taught the local trade of tent-making.⁶ This did not prove that his parents belonged to the laboring classes, as all Jewish boys were taught some trade; but as Saul was afterwards forced to support himself by his craft,⁷ we must infer that the family was not rich, and that his father obtained his citizenship, not by purchase, but as the reward of service rendered by himself or some ancestor, perhaps in war. Under such circumstances, Saul's education, like that

¹ Plutarch's Lives, vol. vii.

² Conybeare and Howson, i. 57, 130.

³ Acts vi. 9.

⁴ Acts xxiii. 6; Phil. iii. 5.

⁵ Acts xxii. 28.

⁶ Acts xviii. 3.

⁷ 1 Cor. iv. 12; 1 Th. ii. 9; 2 Th. iii. 8.

of Jewish boys generally, especially among the Pharisees, must have been strictly limited to Hebrew studies, and whatever Greek he learned probably came through intercourse with Greeks, or through study of the Greek translation of the Scriptures, or such familiarity with the schools of philosophy and rhetoric in Tarsus as any youth of inquiring mind would be likely to gain. All his epistles which remain are in Greek, yet he uses that language rather as a foreigner than as a native, and although quoting continually from the Hebrew Scriptures, makes very rare quotations from other writers, and only such as he might easily have caught from popular sayings.¹ In the single instance in the book of Acts where he is represented as making a Greek citation,² the passage is from a local poet whose verses were probably current in Tarsus.³ The fact that he preferred to dictate his epistles rather than write them himself is sometimes thought to mean that he found difficulty in writing Greek ;⁴ while in actual speech he was always quick to use the Hebrew tongue (as then spoken) whenever occasion required.⁵ But these instances are curious as showing Saul's individual characteristics, rather than important as proving anything for or against his literary skill. Certainly he always had command enough of Greek to express his thoughts in a very intense and forcible, and often eloquent way.⁶

When his childhood was past, Saul was sent to Jerusalem, according to a statement in the book of Acts, where he studied under Gamaliel, one of the most noted and broad-minded rabbis of the age,⁷ and became well versed in the rabbinical subtleties of Scripture interpretation.⁸ Probably he also learned

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 32, 33 ; Titus i. 12.

² Acts xvii. 28.

³ Aratus, a Cilician.

⁴ Rom. xvi. 22 ; comp. 1 Cor. xvi. 21 ; Coloss. iv. 18 ; 2 Thess. iii. 17.

⁵ Acts xxi. 40 ; xxii. 2.

⁶ Comp. Hausrath, pp. 11-14 ; Renan, *Les Apôtres*, 166 ; Farrar, i. 35-39 ; 619-637.

⁷ Acts xxii. 3.

⁸ Comp. Gal. iii. 8-17 ; iv. 22-31, and many similar passages.

something of the higher philosophical speculations upon religious themes with which the scholarly minds of all races were then becoming familiar. In these respects Saul's training was of course wholly different from that of either of the twelve apostles. How long he remained in Jerusalem we cannot tell. It is possible that he had a married sister there,¹ and many think that he remained with her until the time when he is first mentioned in the Acts. If this were so, he would have known something of Jesus himself, and might have heard him and been present at the crucifixion. As he never alludes to this, however,² and nowhere quotes Christ's own language, we feel quite sure that he could not have known him personally, but probably returned to Tarsus when his studies were over. As to Saul's age, we can only judge of it from his being called a "young man" when we first know him,³ and from his relations with the Sanhedrin or Jewish Council, of which he seems at that time to have been a member,—judging from the authority with which he was invested after Stephen's death.⁴ This would make him at least thirty at that time. If a member of the Sanhedrin, he was also, according to the Jewish laws, a married man; a fact probable in itself from the great importance always attached to marriage among the Jews, and especially among Pharisees. Saul's own allusions to this point are rather vague,⁵ but such expressions as "Have we not a right to lead about a sister (believer) as wife, as well as other apostles and Peter?" sound very much as if he had a wife, who for some reason did not accompany him on his travels, while Peter and the other apostles were accompanied by theirs.⁶

It is always interesting to know something of the personal traits of great men; but of Saul we can learn very little. Apparently there was some peculiarity, perhaps hesitancy of speech, against which he had to contend, and which only his great force of character or of eloquence could overcome.⁷

¹ Acts xxiii. 16.

² 1 Cor. ix. 1, xv. 8, obviously allude to inward visions of Christ.

³ Acts vii. 58. ⁴ Acts ix. 1, 2; xxvi. 10. ⁵ 1 Cor. vii. 7, 8; ix. 5.

⁶ 1 Cor. ix. 5. ⁷ 2 Cor. x. 10; xi. 6; 1 Cor. ii. 1; Gal. iv. 13, 14.

Once he speaks mysteriously of a "thorn in the flesh," which he regarded as a "messenger of Satan to buffet him," and which seems to have tortured him through the later years of his life.¹ What this was, we can only guess, — whether some physical deformity, or epilepsy,² or ophthalmia,³ or severe nervous prostration following upon the states of trance or ecstasy into which he sometimes fell.⁴ The most ancient account of his appearance that has survived is found in the writing called the "Acts of Paul and Thecla," one of the apocryphal New Testament books. Though not written probably before the second or third century,⁵ the passage is worth quoting as showing what the earliest traditions were among those who held the Apostle in highest reverence. As Paul was visiting Iconium, a town of Asia Minor, according to this account, one Onesiphorus with his wife and sons went out to meet him and invite him to his house. Never having seen Paul, they recognized him at once through the description which Titus had given them. "At length they saw a man (namely Paul) coming, of a low stature, bald (or shaved) on the head, crooked thighs, handsome legs, hollow-eyed; a crooked nose ; full of grace ; for sometimes he appeared as a man, sometimes he had the countenance of an angel."⁶

However trustworthy this account may be, it is clear that Saul was one of those who accomplished great ends, not through outward gifts or advantages of birth or person, but purely through the native force of mind and soul.

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

² Bunsen (*Bibelwerk*), on 2 Cor. xii. 7.

³ Farrar, i. 467, 652.

⁴ Hausrath, p. 135.

⁵ It is quoted by Tertullian, about A.D. 200.

⁶ *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, i. 7.

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Hausrath's *Apostel Paulus*; Farrar's *St. Paul*, vol. i., vol. ii. 628; Conybeare and Howson's *Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i.; Renan's *Les Apôtres*, chap. x.; *Apocryphal New Testament*; Hanson's *The Apostle Paul and the Preaching of Christianity in the Primitive Church*; *Paul of Tarsus*, by a Graduate; Holsten's *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und des Petrus*; Hausrath's *New Testament Times*, vol. i. (Sanhedrin); Carpenter's *Life in Palestine when Jesus lived*, chap. iii.; *Passages from St. Paul* (London Sunday-school Association).

QUESTIONS.

1. Where was Tarsus ? 2. What gave it commercial importance ?
3. What trades were pursued there ? 4. What interesting historical events are associated with it ? 5. What can you tell about its population or its culture ? 6. What language or languages were used there, and by what classes ? 7. Who was Saul, and what can you tell of his family ? 8. What education did he receive in Tarsus ? 9. What acquaintance had he with Greek language or literature ? 10. Give instances of his quotations from Greek or Latin writers.

11. Where else did Saul study, and with whom ? 12. What education did he receive in Jerusalem ? 13. What difference was there between Saul's education and that of the other apostles ? 14. How long did Saul probably live in Jerusalem ? 15. What reason is there to think that he had relatives there ? 16. Does it seem to you probable that he ever saw Jesus, or knew about him during Jesus' life ? 17. How old was Saul when first mentioned in the Acts ? 18. Was he married ? 19. What allusions are there in the Epistles to Saul's personal peculiarities ? 20. What early account is there of his personal appearance ? 21. What idea do we get from these sources of Saul's outward advantages ?

III.

CONVERSION OF SAUL.

A.D. 34. Acts viii., ix.

THE death of Stephen was an important epoch in the history of the little community at Jerusalem. "That same day," we are told, "there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles."¹ Why the apostles escaped the persecution we cannot tell: perhaps because of their strong feeling that Jerusalem was to be the centre of the new Messianic kingdom; perhaps because it was against the sympathizers with Stephen that the wrath of the Jews was especially aimed. In any case, the quiet days of waiting together for the coming of the Lord were rudely ended, and the gospel, which had thus far been heard only in Jerusalem, was spread far abroad, and began a much wider mission.

Even more important for Christianity was the effect of Stephen's death upon Saul, who was present and took part in it.² At first it simply stirred his Jewish zeal to new intensity. "He made havoc of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women, committed them to prison."³ Nor did he confine his rage to Jerusalem; he obtained a commission from the Sanhedrin to follow the fugitives to the most distant point to which they fled. "Breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, he . . . desired letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way . . . he might bring them bound to Jerusalem."⁴

But on this journey to Damascus a startling incident occurred. As he came near to the city, "suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven; and he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou

¹ Acts viii. 1.

² Acts vii. 58.

³ Acts viii. 3.

⁴ Acts ix. 1, 2.

me?"¹ The voice seemed to him the voice of Jesus himself ; and after being led into Damascus, blinded by the light and overcome by the strange experience, he was visited by a disciple named Ananias, at whose hands he was baptized, and so became from that time a disciple of the cause which he had come to overthrow.²

Nothing could be more interesting than to understand exactly the nature of so momentous an occurrence as this. But such profound spiritual crises can never be fully explained, even by the soul that passes through them ; and this, like all others of the kind, must always remain an enigma. Probably he could never remember himself precisely what had occurred ; at any rate he was only able, as we have seen, to describe it to others as a "light from heaven, shining round about him,"³ or as "a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me and them which journeyed with me."⁴ This would, of course, apply to many heavenly phenomena ; and accordingly some suppose that Saul and his followers "were overtaken by a violent storm, when the lightning struck Saul, and he fell senseless to the ground;"⁵ others understand simply "the glare of the mid-day sun in the East,"⁶ others, "some overwhelmingly sudden burst of thunder ; some inexpressibly vivid gleam of electric flame; some blinding, suffocating, maddening breath of the sirocco;"⁷ others still, "a severe sun-stroke, such as often befalls travellers under a mid-day sun, or simply a trance, produced by the fatigues and heat of the journey, acting upon a highly excited mind."⁸ As Saul himself afterwards referred to visions or trances as something which he more than once experienced,⁹ there is reason to suppose that this incident, whatever its outward character, was of that nature, and that the essential element in it was a purely spiritual process. In fact, it must be remembered that the

¹ Acts ix. 3, 4.

² Acts ix. 5-18.

³ Acts ix. 8.

⁴ Acts xxvi. 13.

⁵ Neander's Planting and Training, i. 84; Renan's *Les Apôtres*, p. 181.

⁶ Conybeare and Howson, i. 109.

⁷ Farrar, i. 191.

⁸ Hausrath, p. 126.

⁹ Acts xxii. 17; 2 Cor. xii. 1-4.

Apostle never alludes, in his own writings, to any unusual event as accompanying his conversion, but speaks of it, in the only case where he refers to it at all, as an inward revelation.¹ "When it pleased God . . . to reveal his Son in me," this is the sole allusion in the Epistles to the event which takes so prominent a place in the book of Acts.²

In the book of Acts we have three different accounts of Saul's conversion,— one in the regular course of the narrative,³ and two others in speeches attributed to Saul himself, and given many years later.⁴ The differences in these accounts, although no greater than we commonly find in descriptions of such exciting scenes, are still very noticeable, and show how impossible it was, when that book was written, to obtain any exact account of the event. According to one statement, Saul's companions heard a voice, but saw no man;⁵ according to another, they "saw the light, but heard not the voice."⁶ According to the first and second accounts, Saul did not receive the heavenly message until he had come to Damascus, when it was given him by Ananias;⁷ according to the third account, purporting to come from Saul himself, the entire revelation was made to him directly, as part of his vision, and we are even told that it was spoken in the Hebrew tongue.⁸

On every ground, therefore, we are led to conclude that the real importance of this event lies, not in the outward occurrence (which we cannot, in any case, accurately recover), but in the inward change which it produced. Nor does it lessen in the least the dignity of the conversion to suppose it the culmination in Saul's mind of feelings and beliefs to which he had previously been tending. Such great spiritual revulsions are never the work of a moment; least of all in natures so earnest

¹ The two passages, 1 Cor. ix. 1 and xv. 8, may, of course, refer to this event, but there is nothing whatever to prove it.

² Gal. i. 15, 16.

³ Acts ix. 3-18.

⁵ Acts ix. 7.

⁷ Acts ix. 10-17; xxii. 12-16.

⁴ Acts xxii. 6-16; xxvi. 12-18.

⁶ Acts xxii. 9.

⁸ Acts xxvi. 14-18.

and thoughtful as Saul's. To suppose that all which he had gone through before his journey to Damascus had had no effect whatever upon his mind or heart, would be to assume that Saul was of much less than ordinary intelligence. We must remember that the incidents of Stephen's heroic death were still fresh in his mind. Before that time, indeed, he must have seen much of the Nazarenes in Jerusalem, noticed the ardor of their faith and beauty of their lives, and heard the name of Jesus the Messiah often upon their lips. Perhaps he was himself one of those who had "disputed with Stephen" in the "synagogue of them of Cilicia"¹ and had felt the force of his Scripture arguments or his burning pleas for Jesus of Nazareth, even when trying to confute them. It must be remembered, too, that he, as well as the disciples, had his mind full of a coming Messiah, a Son of Man, or Second Adam, whom his rabbinical studies had taught him to expect. In the midst of his persecutions of the little band, he must have seen much which appealed to his feelings and his thought. To one in this mood, the long, six or eight days' journey to Damascus (136 miles) must have given ample occasion for reflection, and we can easily imagine that it needed only some inward vision, or some storm or lightning-flash or sudden physical prostration, to hasten the approaching crisis, and turn him from a persecutor into a believer. The Jesus whom he had despised and whose followers he had pursued, seemed to appear to him as the very Christ.

This view of Saul's conversion, as a gradual process culminating in some one startling incident, is fully confirmed by the events which came after it. As a period of inward meditation and struggle preceded the change, so a long period of quiet study or thought followed it. Whatever the experience on the way to Damascus may have been, it evidently had not prepared him to take his new position or enter upon the new work at once. There were many questions to be met, many doubts to be answered, many misgivings, perhaps, to be silenced, before he was ready to teach the new doctrine which he had so suddenly accepted.

¹ Acts vi. 9.

The book of Acts, which passes very lightly over many of the important epochs of Saul's history, gives no hint of this whatever. It tells us that he remained "certain days" at Damascus, preaching Christ at once in the synagogues, and then, a little while later, went to Jerusalem to "join himself to the disciples."¹ In one of his Epistles, however, he gives us himself a very different account. "When it pleased God," he says, "to reveal his Son in me, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood, neither went I up to Jerusalem, to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. After three years I went up to Jerusalem."²

For three years, then, Saul remained in Arabia and Damascus. Arabia is a vague term, covering the entire peninsula south of Damascus to the sea; and in what exact region this long interval was spent, we can only conjecture. Some have supposed that Saul joined some band of pilgrims and journeyed with them as far as Mt. Sinai, the holy spot where Moses had received the Law from the hands of Jehovah.³ It seems more probable, however, that Saul used the term Arabia merely to denote the unfrequented regions around Damascus, where, in the excitement of his feeling, he sought retirement and quiet, to compose his thoughts, and perhaps study more deliberately the new belief to which he had committed himself. Neither in the book of Acts nor in the Epistles do we hear of any churches founded in these regions, or any results of a three years' ministry. We are left to infer, therefore, that it was not three years of preaching or working, but three years of seclusion. It was one thing for Saul to accept Jesus as the Messiah; it was quite another, it seems, to feel himself prepared to proclaim this truth to the world.

Saul's conversion took place probably about A.D. 34.

¹ Acts ix. 19-26.

² Gal. i. 15-18.

³ Conybeare and Howson, i. 119; Hausrath, p. 140.

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QUESTIONS.

1. What consequences followed the death of Stephen? 2. What change did this bring about in the life at Jerusalem? 3. What part did Saul take in the persecution? 4. With what purpose did he go to Damascus? 5. Describe what happened on the way, as given in Acts ix. 6. What are some of the explanations of this phenomenon? 7. Which seems to you the most probable? 8. Where does Saul allude to this event in his own writings, and in what way? 9. Does he seem to you to refer to an outward event or an inward one? 10. Putting his words and the narrative in the Acts together, what conclusion do you draw?

11. How many accounts are given of Saul's conversion in Acts, and where? 12. Do you notice any contradictions between them? if so, what? 13. How do these differences seem to you to affect the narrative? 14. Is it more natural to suppose such a conversion instantaneous or gradual? 15. How much is Saul likely to have known of Jesus and his followers before going to Damascus? 16. Where did Saul spend the three years after his conversion, and in what way? 17. How do you explain his not beginning to preach or joining the disciples at once? 18. What different accounts of this period are given in the Acts and in the Epistle to Galatians? 19. Which is more likely to be right, and why? 20. What was the probable date of Saul's conversion?

IV.

SAUL JOINS THE CHRISTIANS.

A.D. 34-48. Acts ix.-xi.

We have already seen that Saul did not begin at once to preach or teach the new doctrines. On the contrary, it was many years after his conversion before he entered actively upon the work. This long period of waiting is a part of Saul's life to which little attention is ever paid, and of which the records are unfortunately very scanty; yet it is impossible to understand Saul or his true relation to early Christianity, without taking it into account.

For three years, as he himself tells us,¹ he remained in Arabia and Damascus, being finally driven from Damascus, according to the account in Acts, by the anger of his fellow Jews towards him as an apostate. This event in his life evidently made a strong impression on him; as he retained a vivid recollection, many years after, of the window in a friend's house opening upon the city wall, through which he was let down in a basket to escape the enemies who were lying in wait to stone him, or send him back, as a prisoner, to the Sanhedrin at Jerusalem.²

From Damascus he went directly to Jerusalem; but instead of uniting himself with the disciples and laboring with them, he left them almost immediately. Why he did this we cannot be quite sure, as the accounts differ greatly. According to Acts, "he assayed to join himself to the disciples, but they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple."³ It was only through the influence of Barnabas, who seems to have understood Saul all along better than any of the twelve apostles, that they were willing to receive

¹ Gal. i. 18.

² 2 Cor. xi. 33; Acts ix. 24, 25.

³ Acts ix. 26.

him at all; and, even then, he remained but a short time, being threatened with death by the "Grecians."¹ According to his own account, however, his visit to Jerusalem was expressly to see Peter, and he saw none of the other apostles, except James, the Lord's brother. After visiting Peter for fifteen days, he came, of his own accord. "into the regions of Syria and Cilicia."² The language is so explicit here, and the writer is so anxious for us to understand that he did *not* see the other apostles ("Now the things which I write unto you, behold, before God, I lie not"), that we have to infer either that the apostles themselves held entirely aloof from him, or, which is more probable, that Saul did not seek them, but came to Jerusalem solely to become acquainted with the two most prominent disciples, and get from them what information he needed, and then left them. Possibly the coldness of the apostles hastened his departure. In any case, both accounts agree that his stay in Jerusalem was very brief, and that he saw little or nothing of Christ's followers in Judæa, but passed on at once through Syria, to his home in Tarsus.³

And now we have to think of Saul as remaining in Tarsus, taking little or no part in active affairs, for several years. From the book of Acts alone, it is true, we should know nothing of this long interval;⁴ but Saul's own language makes it clear that no less than ten years must have passed between his leaving Jerusalem and his beginning to work or preach.⁵ How this time was spent, we can only conjecture. In one passage he alludes to his preaching in the region of Cilicia and Syria; but as no single reference is afterwards made to any ministry or any churches in those parts, and as the Acts and the Epistles are equally silent as to this period, we are left to suppose that

¹ Acts ix. 27-30.

² Gal. i. 18-21.

³ Acts ix. 30; Gal. i. 21, 22.

⁴ Acts ix. 30; xi. 25.

⁵ Gal. ii. 1. According to this passage, fourteen years intervened between the first visit to Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26-30) and the visit described in Acts xv. Supposing that three years were covered by the events in Acts xi. 25-xiv. 28, this leaves ten years for Saul's stay in and about Tarsus. If we suppose Gal. ii. 1 to refer to the visit mentioned in Acts xi. 30-xii. 25, the interval would be still longer.

these years, like those in Arabia, were spent in comparative retirement, and that this entire period was, in a certain sense, a long preparation for the calling to which he afterwards so ardently consecrated himself. Possibly he was waiting for some more gracious recognition on the part of the apostles, before he should openly join them; possibly he was studying the new truths which he had accepted, and making clear to his mind the relation in which they stood to Jewish Scripture and prophecy. Certainly nothing could be more interesting than to think of the Great Apostle fitting himself for his calling by so many years of careful thought.

Meantime, new and important questions had arisen among the disciples of Jesus. In the persecution caused by Stephen's preaching, they had been driven from Jerusalem northward, some going as far as the island of Cyprus, some fleeing to Antioch, the capital city of Syria.¹ Antioch had at this time about 500,000 inhabitants, being the largest city in the world, after Rome and Alexandria, as well as one of the most wealthy and luxurious. Its situation, at the foot of mountain ranges, was extremely picturesque. Within the enclosure of its walls were precipitous hills, deep ravines, and charming grottos and cascades, and the city itself was richly decorated, according to the taste of that day, with temples, aqueducts, and baths. Fine Greek statues stood on the streets, and through the entire length of the city ran a grand Corso, with colonnades of four rows of columns on each side. It seems to have had all the architectural splendor of a Greek or Roman city, with all the social corruption and religious superstitions of East and West combined.

In this capital of the Eastern world, the disciples of Jesus found themselves in strange surroundings and faced by a new problem. The Jewish colony was a large one, with many synagogues; but other forms of worship prevailed around them, and Greeks as well as Jews began to interest themselves in the

¹ Acts xi. 19.

new faith from Judæa. What, then, should be done? No provision had been made at Jerusalem for this exigency. Must the new-comers be refused entrance to their gatherings? None but the circumcised took part in the temple worship; should the same rule be enforced still? Were Jews and Greeks to be put on an equality in the new movement, or was it to be limited still to the Jews?

How serious a problem this really was, and how long it agitated the disciples, many circumstances show. At Antioch, the question settled itself, as such practical problems often do, by the necessities of the case. But when the news reached Jerusalem that the gospel was preached to Greeks as well as Jews, such alarm was felt that Barnabas, one of their most trusted leaders, was sent to Antioch to investigate the matter.¹ The choice proved a fortunate one, for Barnabas evidently had full sympathy with the new movement, and instead of checking, took immediate measures to forward it. Bethinking himself of the young convert whom he had met so many years before at Jerusalem, and whose sincerity and ability he had recognized when others distrusted him, he went himself to Tarsus, to seek Saul and invite him to take part with him in the new undertaking.² Evidently this was the opportunity for which Saul was waiting. Up to this time he had taken no active part in events, and had not openly connected himself with the disciples; but being summoned now at so critical a moment, and seeing how important a work was to be done in Syria, he joined Barnabas at once and returned with him to Antioch. From this time we may think of Saul as one of the apostles of Jesus.

Still another important event happened at this time in Antioch; but how far it was connected with Saul's coming we cannot tell. While at Jerusalem, the believers in Jesus had never received any special name, and thus far in our narrative we have had no name to call them by. As they had never separated themselves from the Jews, and had no distinct forms of worship, they never thought of taking a new title, but rather

¹ Acts ix. 20, 22.

² Acts xi. 22-26.

regarded themselves as the true Israelites, for whom the old promises about the Messiah had been actually fulfilled. If the other Jews spoke of them at all, as a separate body, they probably called them Galileans,¹ or considered them an heretical sect and called them Nazarenes.² At Antioch their situation was different. As Greeks came to them in as great numbers as Jews, they probably separated themselves more and more from the synagogues, and met together more frequently as an independent body. In any case, they attracted attention to themselves as they had never done before, and before a year had passed, had a name of their own to distinguish them from the various bodies of Jews and Gentiles about them. As the Book of Acts tells us, "the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch."³ How did they get this name? It is quite plain that they did not give it to themselves; as they continued to call each other "brethren,"⁴ or "disciples,"⁵ and the word Christian is found only once in the Book of Acts, when it is used by King Agrippa.⁶ There is every reason to suppose that it was at first a sort of nick-name, given them, not by the Jews, who would have thought it far too honorable a title to give the followers of the obscure Jesus, but by the Greeks or Romans, who heard the disciples talking of the *Christ*, or Messiah, and mistook the word for the name of their leader.⁷ Once given them, however, it clung to them, as nick-names are so apt to do, and as there was nothing dishonorable in it, whatever its source, the disciples finally accepted it, and soon after the New Testament times we find it universally employed, as it has been ever since.

Whether it was at this time or somewhat later that they withdrew from the synagogues, and formed a separate organization, and began to worship by themselves, we cannot tell. Certainly it was not earlier than this period. Whenever this

¹ Acts ii. 7.

² Acts xxiv. 5.

³ Acts xi. 26.

⁴ Acts xiv. 2; xv. 1, 3, 22; xxviii. 14.

⁵ Acts xi. 26; xx. 7.

⁶ Acts xxvi. 28; also 1 Pet. iv. 16.

⁷ Compare Tacitus Ann. xv. 44.

happened, the name "ecclesia," or church, seems to have been given to the assembly; a term borrowed from the Greeks, who applied it to the gathering together of citizens for political purposes.¹ As Saul had been familiar with this term in Tarsus, where the whole body of citizens, meeting to ratify the decrees of their rulers, were called the "ecclesia," it may well be that he was the first to propose it for this new use.² This would be all the more natural, as the word was used in the Septuagint, or Greek translation of the Old Testament, to denote the assembly or congregation of the Jewish people.³ Since then, the word "ecclesia" has quite lost its political, in its religious signification. No doubt the first organization was of the simplest kind, copied from that of the synagogues; but from this time, or soon after, it was possible to speak of Christian churches.⁴

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QUESTIONS.

1. How much time passed between Saul's conversion and the beginning of his public ministry?
2. When did he leave Damascus, and in what way?
3. Whither did he go next, and how was he received?
4. What do you think was his purpose in going to Jerusalem?
5. How long was he there, and whom did he see?
6. Why did he leave Jerusalem, and for what place?
7. How long was he in Tarsus?
8. How much information have we about this long period?
9. Is there any reason to think that he was preaching or teaching then?
10. How is he most likely to have spent these fourteen years?

¹ Acts xix. 39.

² Hausrath, pp. 7, 18.

³ Deut. xxiii. 3; xxxi. 30; 1 Ki. viii. 14; Ps. xxii. 22.

⁴ 1 Thess. i. 1; Gal. i. 2.

11. Where was Antioch, and how much can you tell about it?
12. What brought the disciples of Jesus to Antioch? 13. In what way did their situation there differ from that in Jerusalem?
14. What new question arose there, and what made it so important?
15. What was the feeling at Jerusalem about it, and what was done?
16. Who was Barnabas, and what knowledge had he of Saul?
17. What course did Barnabas take? 18. What did Saul do in consequence?
19. What name was given to the disciples at this time, and by whom?
20. Why had they received no name before, and why should it be given just now?
21. Did they use it at first themselves?
22. What other name began to be used about this time?
23. What was its origin, and what was its first meaning among the Christians?
24. In what sense may the Christian church be said to have been founded in Antioch?

V.

PAUL IN ASIA MINOR.

(*First Missionary Journey.*)

A.D. 48-51. Acts xii.-xiv.

SAUL remained but a short time in Antioch; perhaps not more than a year.¹ The book of Acts speaks of a visit to Jerusalem at this time made by Barnabas and Saul, to carry relief to the brethren there, in consequence of a great famine;² but as Saul had entirely forgotten it when the Epistle to the Galatians was written,³ it could not have been important, and perhaps was only planned and never carried out. In this same connection a persecution is also mentioned, in which James, the brother of John, was killed, and Peter thrown into prison, from which he was thought to have been miraculously released. Immediately after this persecution, King Herod, who had caused it, suddenly died of a painful disease which was considered a direct judgment of God. Other historians tell this same story in a somewhat different way.⁴

Jewish colonies, as we have seen, were scattered far and wide through Asia and Europe, especially in the lines of commerce; and while the first disciples of Jesus clung to Jerusalem as the proper scene of their labors, Saul was led to carry the new truth as far abroad as possible. This may have been simply because he had in him the instinct of activity and adventure; or because he felt so much more strongly than the other disciples that Christianity had in it a message for all the world. Whatever the cause, he certainly showed through life the passion for propagating his ideas from which all missionary movements have sprung; and it is to him that we owe the first spread of Christianity through Asia and Europe.

¹ Acts xi. 26.

² Acts xi. 29, 30; xii. 25.

³ Gal. ii. 1 refers to the visit mentioned in Acts xv. as his *second* visit.

⁴ Acts xii. 20-23; comp. Jos. Antiq. xix. 8, 2; Eusebius, ii. 10.

As some of those who were driven from Jerusalem belonged in Cyprus, including Barnabas himself,¹ who shared Saul's missionary spirit, the first journey was naturally in that direction. Taking with them, as a companion and assistant, John Mark, a relative of Barnabas whom he had brought with him from Jerusalem,² they started together for Seleucia, and sailed for the island of Cyprus, one hundred miles away.³ Touching first at Salamis, they left the vessel there and travelled through the island to Paphos, preaching in the Jewish synagogues as they went. Either they found little hearing from Jews or Gentiles, however, or else the writer of Acts could find out little of this part of Saul's ministry, as he mentions only a single incident of this visit. Paphos was at that time noted for its sorcerers, one of whom, Bar-Jesus, who had taken the Arabian name Elymas for effect (as distinguished singers in these days are apt to assume fine-sounding Italian names), was in favor with the Roman proconsul Sergius *Paulus*. Using his magic arts to prevent Barnabas and Saul from getting a hearing before the proconsul, Saul thwarted his schemes so completely that, according to the later traditions, the sorcerer was struck blind, and the proconsul won over to the Christian faith.⁴ Beyond that one tradition we know nothing of this first missionary effort of the two apostles, and even the name of Sergius Paulus is never heard of again; but the visit has a certain interest as being the occasion when Saul's change of name to Paul is first mentioned.⁵ As the fact is introduced just here in connection with the account of Sergius *Paulus*, it has been supposed that the two incidents have some mysterious relation to each other; but this is unquestionably a mere coincidence. In point of fact, Paul (or Paulus) is simply the Latin form of the Hebrew name Saul, and would naturally have come into use in his intercourse with Romans, who latinized all foreign names as we often anglicize French or German ones. There is no

¹ Acts iv. 36; xi. 20.

² Acts xii. 12, 25; Col. iv. 10; possibly the same Mark to whom the second Gospel is attributed, though there is no proof of this.

³ Acts xiii. 1-4.

⁴ Acts xliii. 6-12.

⁵ Acts xiii. 9.

reason to suppose that he at any time formally changed his name; but as his acquaintance with Greeks and Romans increased, his Hebrew name was less used and his Roman one more so, until Paul wholly took the place of Saul. In his own writings he always calls himself Paul,¹ as do the other New Testament writers.²

Finding little success in Cyprus, or little chance of preaching there, the travellers next turned their steps towards Asia Minor, where Jewish colonies had long been established, and an opening offered itself for the new gospel. The journey was a most forbidding and dangerous one; for between Perga, where the travellers landed, and the inland towns they were to visit, was a wild and almost inaccessible mountain region traversed only by caravans, abounding in perilous passes, and inhabited by savage races whom the Romans had never succeeded in subduing. One of the party evidently lost heart in the face of such hardships, for we are told that on their leaving Cyprus, "John, departing from them, returned to Jerusalem," — a desertion for which Paul never forgave him.³ Possibly it was these journeyings which Paul had in mind some years later, when he wrote to the Corinthians of the many "perils of waters, perils of robbers, . . . perils in the wilderness, perils in the sea," with many other disasters to which he had been exposed.⁴ In the book of Acts, however, nothing is said of these trials, but we are simply told that "when they departed from Perga, they came to Antioch in Pisidia."⁵

Antioch in Pisidia, though far less renowned than its namesake in Syria, was an important free city, with the usual Jewish trading element among its population. Here, as in Cyprus, Paul and Barnabas⁶ entered the synagogue on the Sabbath,

¹ Rom. i. 1; 1 Cor. i. 1. ² 2 Peter iii. 15.

³ Acts xiii. 13; xv. 38, 39. Comp. Farrar i. 358, who thinks that Mark may have become alarmed at the too liberal and anti-Jewish tendencies of Paul.

⁴ 2 Cor. xi. 26, 27.

⁵ Acts xiii. 14.

⁶ It is interesting to notice how soon the first formula, Barnabas and Saul changes, as Paul's superiority asserts itself, to Paul and Barnabas. Acts xii. 25; xiii. 7, 46, 50.

not yet feeling themselves separated from the mother-church, and sat down among the worshippers. Being noticed as strangers, the rulers of the synagogue, “after the reading of the laws and prophets sent unto them,” after the usual Jewish custom, “saying : Brothers, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.”¹ On this invitation Paul arose and delivered the first address that is preserved from his lips. Probably it is given here in the language of the writer, rather than of Paul himself, yet it gives us some idea of what the first Christian preaching was ; not an account of Jesus’ life, or even an allusion to his precepts or example, but simply an attempt to show the Jews from their own history that Jesus, who had been crucified at Jerusalem, and had risen from the dead was descended from their own King David, and was to save them from their sins, as Moses could not do.² This caused great excitement among the people, “and the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God.”³ A few Jews and many Gentiles believed ; but after some time, we cannot tell how long, the anger of the Jews grew so great that the apostles were driven from the city.⁴ According to the narrative in Acts, it was at this time that Paul determined no longer to preach to the Jews, but to turn wholly to the Gentiles ;⁵ but as he repeatedly went into their synagogues afterwards,⁶ and the same words were attributed to him on later occasions,⁷ we must infer that his separation from the Jews was not a sudden act, as it appears here, but a gradual process, as he found himself more and more at variance with them in his teachings. Afterwards, this seemed to the New Testament writers so important an incident in his life, that the attempt was made to fix the exact time when it happened. What is very plain is that no preaching caused such bitter hostility among the Jews as Paul’s, and that wherever he went a Gentile congregation was apt to spring up after him.

¹ Acts xiii. 15.

² Acts xiii. 16-41.

³ Acts xiii. 44.

⁴ Acts xiii. 50.

⁵ Acts xiii. 46.

⁶ Acts xiv. 1 ; xvii. 2 ; xviii. 4.

⁷ Acts xviii. 6 ; xxviii. 28.

From Antioch, the disciples travelled southward and eastward, passing through the mountainous regions which afterwards proved so fatal to the crusaders, and coming to Iconium, near which point one of the armies of the second crusade¹ was destroyed by the Turks. In Iconium again, as at Antioch, they began their preaching in the synagogues, and after some time formed a distinct congregation, but were finally threatened with stoning by the incensed Jews, naturally resenting Paul's attacks upon the Jewish law, and were compelled to flee.² The most interesting result of their long stay in Iconium is the popular tradition of the second or third century to which I have already referred,³ according to which a young maiden named Thecla became a convert to Paul's teachings at this place, deserted her lover, and visited Paul in prison, attached herself to him afterwards as his companion, and went with him to Antioch, where she was seized and thrown among wild beasts, and miraculously saved.⁴

Their next stay was in the country about Lystra and Derbe in Lycaonia, where they preached the gospel as before. It was in Lystra that the superstitious inhabitants, astonished at an act of healing which Paul had performed, brought out oxen and garlands, and were on the point of sacrificing to the two apostles as gods. Barnabas, who seemed to them the leader, or was more imposing in his appearance, they called Jupiter; Paul, the chief speaker, they called Mercury. It was with great difficulty that the sacrifice could be prevented.⁵ From Lystra they were driven to Derbe by enemies who followed them from Antioch and Iconium, and persuaded the people to attack them. Paul was nearly stoned to death.⁶ From Derbe they retraced their steps through Iconium and Antioch, visiting the little churches as they passed, and "exhorting them to continue in the faith." They appointed elders over them also, after the custom of the Jewish synagogues. Then returning to the sea-coast they

¹ A.D. 1147.

² Acts xiv. 1-6.

³ Less. ii.

⁴ Apocryphal New Testament, "Acts of Paul and Thecla;" Paul of Tarsus, p. 209.

⁵ Acts xiv. 8-18.

⁶ Acts xiv. 19; 2 Cor. xi. 25.

sailed back to Antioch, to tell all that had happened to them, and how God "had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles."¹

It is impossible to tell with any accuracy how long this journey lasted, as the accounts are so vague that it might be one year or several years. We shall not be far wrong, perhaps, if we limit it to about three years, from A.D. 48 to 51.

REFERENCES.

Hausrath, pp. 209-238 (who considers these the churches to which the Epistle to the *Galatians* was addressed); Farrar, vol. i.; Bible for Learners, iii. 534, etc.; Raphael's Cartoons, — Elymas the Sorcerer, The Sacrifice at Lystra; Howson's Companions of St. Paul; Renan's St. Paul.

QUESTIONS.

1. What persecution is mentioned in Acts xii., and how did it result? 2. How did Saul's way of preaching Christianity differ from that of the other apostles, and what led to this difference? 3. Point out on the map his first missionary journey. 4. Who were his companions, and what can you tell about them? 5. What happened to them in Cyprus? 6. What change of name is mentioned at this time, and how do you understand it? 7. What course did they take on leaving Cyprus, and who abandoned them there? 8. Give some description of the country they had to pass through. 9. Quote some passage from Paul's epistles referring perhaps to this period. 10. What town in Asia Minor did they first visit, and where was it?

11. Which took the lead at first, Paul or Barnabas, and how long did this continue? 12. What happened to them at Antioch? 13. Describe Paul's address in the synagogue. 14. How do you understand Paul's saying, "Lo, we turn to the Gentiles," Acts xiii. 46? 15. In what sense was Paul the apostle to the Gentiles? 16. What place did they next visit, and what happened there? 17. How much do you blame the Jews for not listening to Paul? 18. What legend is connected with Paul's visit to Iconium? 19. Where are Lystra and Derbe, and how were the apostles received there? 20. What course did they follow on their return? 21. How nearly can we fix the length of time taken in this journey? 22. What was its probable date?

¹ Acts xiv. 21-28.

VI.

CONFERENCE AT JERUSALEM.

A.D. 51. Acts xv. ; Gal. ii.

ON his return to Antioch, Paul found the Christian disciples in great commotion. The excitement over the admission of Greeks into the church had proved more serious than he had thought. As the Jewish Scriptures not only required every one to be circumcised but forbade all familiar intercourse with those who were not circumcised, we can see what trouble would be caused among all who still believed the Scriptures. They could not eat the same food with the Gentiles, nor even sit at the same table with them, although sitting together at table was part of the daily rites of the early Christians. Even if left to themselves, therefore, much discord might have arisen; but the matter was made worse by interference from Jerusalem. At Jerusalem, circumcision seems to have been still considered quite as important among Christians as among Jews; and when it was found that Barnabas had accomplished so little,¹ they sent other messengers, in a more private way, to assure the Greek converts that “unless they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved.”² Paul and Barnabas resented such interference most keenly, and “had no small dissension and disputation with them.”³ In fact, the party feeling was so strong and the rupture so serious, that it became necessary to have the question settled at once, or all peace and unity would be destroyed. It was the first great crisis in the Christian church.

Paul and Barnabas, therefore, went up to Jerusalem to lay the question before the apostles. Some years afterwards Paul wrote an account of this visit in a letter which has fortunately

¹ Acts xi. 22.

² Acts xv. 1.

³ Acts xv. 2.

been saved, so that we have two descriptions of the event, and can see how important and exciting an epoch it was.¹ Paul had not been in Jerusalem, according to his own account, since his short visit to Peter, fourteen years before.² He had not yet met the other apostles,³ and had been carrying on his whole work thus far independently of them. To the brethren in Judæa he was known only as the dangerous innovator, who had set the Scriptures aside and let Gentiles into the church. The hostility of the Jewish party showed itself as soon as he arrived. He had brought with him a young Greek convert, named Titus, whom the Jewish Christians declined to receive unless he was circumcised.⁴ This Paul indignantly refused to allow, denouncing those who took part in the matter as “false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage.”⁵ As soon as possible Paul sought the three leading disciples, James, Peter, and John, and argued the matter with them in a private discussion;⁶ not, as he assures us, to get their authority to preach, but only to put before them his own views distinctly. What his course of reasoning was, he does not tell us. If we may infer from his line of thought in the epistle which contains his account of the incident, he argued that if circumcision was still insisted on, Christ might as well not have come at all;⁷ that the Jewish Scriptures were no longer binding, since Christ appeared;⁸ that Jews and Greeks were absolutely equal in the new church;⁹ that to observe still the Mosaic rites was to return from freedom into bondage;¹⁰ and

¹ That Acts xv. and Gal. ii. refer to the same event, though long disputed, is now commonly acknowledged (comp. Farrar i. 405 n.). The differences between the two accounts show plainly that the author of Acts drew his information from some other source than Paul himself. In points where there is any real conflict, Paul's authority is of course to be followed.

² Gal. i. 18; ii. 1.

³ Gal. i. 19.

⁴ Gal. ii. 3.

⁵ Gal. ii. 4. Renan and some others understand Gal. ii. 3 to mean that Titus *was* circumcised, only not by compulsion, but through consideration for the feeling of the brethren, — a very forced construction of the verse. Comp. Renan's St. Paul, pp. 88, 89.

⁶ Gal. ii. 2.

⁷ Gal. v. 2.

⁸ Gal. iii. 24, 25.

⁹ Gal. iii. 28.

¹⁰ Gal. iii. 9, 10; v. 1.

that for the future, belief in Christ and the new life that went with it were all that could be required of any believer.¹

How passionate the dispute was, and how lofty a tone the older disciples were inclined at first to take towards the later convert, we can judge from the language in which Paul, years afterwards, alludes to the discussion: "They who seemed to be somewhat (whatsoever they were, it maketh no matter to me: God accepteth no man's person),—they who seemed to be somewhat conferred nothing upon me" [or imparted no instruction or authority to me]. Again, he speaks of James, Peter, and John as those who "seemed to be [had the repute of being] pillars;" as if to emphasize the fact that whatever high position they claimed for themselves, or others claimed for them, he recognized nothing of the kind.² In this unequal contest, where the whole weight of official authority was thrown on the other side, it is fortunate that the cause of a broad and free Christianity had so uncompromising an advocate as Paul. It speaks well, both for his courage and eloquence and for the conciliatory Christian temper of his opponents, that no break occurred in the Christian ranks, but that the older apostles gracefully gave the "right hand of fellowship" to Paul and Barnabas, and while continuing themselves to preach to the Jews, bade the two to go unto the heathen.³

The contrast is singular between this account, given by Paul himself, and that given in the book of Acts. According to Acts, the question was settled, not in a private discussion, but at a public gathering. Nothing is said of Titus, or of any conflict between Paul and the other apostles, but the whole matter is represented as peaceably arranged in open debate. "The apostles and elders came together for to consider of the matter." Peter spoke first, taking the side of Barnabas and Paul, and declaring that God in a vision⁴ had called him, Peter, to preach to the Gentiles; next, "the multitude kept silence and gave audience

¹ Gal. iii.

³ Gal. ii. 9.

² Gal. ii. 6, 9.

⁴ Acts x. 9-16; xi. 2-18.

to Barnabas and Paul;" at last James arose to give the final decision. The Gentiles need not be circumcised; "no greater burden" was to be laid upon them than "these necessary things :" they were to "abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication." These precepts, inasmuch as they all heard them read every Sabbath day in the synagogues,¹ ought still to be observed; but nothing else would be insisted upon. This decree was sent by letter to all the churches.²

These two accounts are certainly very unlike each other, and can be made to agree only by supposing that while the matter was really adjusted in private discussion, as Paul says, some public meeting was also held, which Paul had forgotten or thought too unimportant to record, but which afterwards grew by tradition into the form given it in Acts. Certain it is that Paul never alludes to any such gathering, and when occasions arose for enforcing the precepts given above, he made no reference to them, but laid down very different principles of his own.³

The events which followed this meeting were as interesting in their way as the meeting itself. Paul returned to Antioch, followed soon by Peter, who seems to have come with the purpose of showing how complete the harmony between them was. At first Peter met the Gentiles freely, eating at the same table with them at the church feasts, as though Greek and Jew were really one. Soon after his arrival, however, certain messengers sent by James came to Antioch, to see that the new freedom was not pushed too far, and behold, Peter at once "withdrew and separated himself" from his Gentile friends, "fearing them which were of the circumcision." Worse still, even Barnabas, up to that time in closest sympathy with Paul, was carried away by this evil example, and turned his back on all his former professions.

Once more Paul's indignation was roused. Nothing more cowardly or false than such conduct could well be imagined;

¹ Acts xv. 21.

² Acts xv. 6-29.

³ 1 Cor. viii. 1-13; x. 14, 20, 25, 27. Comp. Lightfoot's Galatians, p. 297.

and Paul did not hesitate to hold it up in its true character, however high in station the offenders were. He called it sheer hypocrisy. Meeting Peter, apparently on some public occasion, he "withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed." "If thou, being a Jew," Paul said to him before them all, "livest after the manner of the Gentiles, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?" If these Jewish ways were not necessary, Peter was acting most hypocritically; if they were, Paul declared vehemently, "Christ is dead in vain."¹

So the great crisis passed; and if the result proved how hard it was, even for Christian apostles, to give up their old beliefs, it also showed, as nothing else could, what new order of man had come into the Christian church. The greater the difficulties he had to encounter, and the more timid or irresolute his companions became, the more determined was he in his course. Here was one who not only saw the vital distinction between the new faith and the old, and felt the necessity of separating Christianity once for all from Judaism, but was quite ready to defend his position, even if he had to stand, as finally he did, alone.

In the later histories of the church, this meeting which has just been described was dignified by the name of the "First Council at Jerusalem." It took place, so nearly as we can reckon, about A.D. 51.

REFERENCES.

Lightfoot's Paul's Epistle to Galatians (see Dissertation on St. Paul and the Three); Farrar's Paul, vol. i.; Renan's St. Paul, chap. ii.; Baur's Paul, vol. i.; Keim's Aus dem Urchristenthum (chapter on Der Apostelkonvent; A scholarly attempt to reconcile the Acts and Galatians); Hall's Orthodoxy and Heresy in the Christian Church, lecture i.; Zeller's Acts of the Apostles; Schwegler's Das Nachapostolische Zeitalter, vol. i.; Sorley's Jewish Christians and Judaism.

¹ Gal. ii. 11-21.

QUESTIONS.

1. What trouble arose after Paul's return to Antioch, and from what causes ? 2. By whom was this trouble fomented ? 3. Were those right, or wrong, who thought the Christian practices forbidden by the Jewish Scriptures ? 4. How serious a crisis does this seem to you to have been ? 5. Why did Paul and Barnabas go to Jerusalem ? 6. What two accounts of this visit have survived ? 7. When had Paul been in Jerusalem before, and what had been his relations with the apostles ? 8. Who was Titus, and what happened in connection with him ? 9. According to Paul's account, what discussion occurred in Jerusalem, and between whom ? 10. What position did the older apostles take, and what did Paul ? 11. In what tone does Paul describe this meeting ? 12. What was the result, as Paul gives it ?

13. How is this same incident described in Acts, and what result is reached ? 14. Point out the differences in the two accounts. 15. How do you explain these differences ? 16. Which account are we to follow, and why ? 17. Describe Peter's visit to Antioch, and his course while there. 18. What part did Barnabas take ? 19. How does this conduct seem to you ? 20. How did Paul appear ? 21. What impression of Paul's character do you get from this whole affair ? 22. What was this meeting afterwards called ? 23. What was its date ?

VII.

PAUL IN GREECE.

(*Second Journey.*)

A.D. 51-54. Acts xvi.-xviii.

As soon as the troubles at Antioch were over, Paul proposed to Barnabas, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the word of the Lord, and see how they do." Barnabas consented, but insisted upon taking with him his nephew John Mark, who had deserted them in the former journey as soon as the hardships of the mission began. This Paul refused to do. "And the contention was so sharp between them that they departed asunder one from the other: and so Barnabas took Mark and sailed unto Cyprus."¹ Little causes led to serious results then as now, it seems, and this petty quarrel not only deprived Paul of his companion for the journey, but robbed the early church of one of its most high-minded and efficient workers. From this moment Barnabas, if we can judge from the book of Acts, disappears from Christian history.² Possibly his taking sides with Peter in the recent dispute had something to do with this misunderstanding. If so, the whole affair seems the more unfortunate. In justice to Barnabas, however, we must remember that we know nothing of his motives or of his version of the affair; so we can only regret that one who had seemed so entirely in sympathy with Paul, and who promised so much for the cause of Christianity should have had so brief a career.

To fill Barnabas's place, Paul took with him a certain Silas,³ (or Silvanus) of whom we know little more than that having been in high favor at Jerusalem,⁴ he now joined his fortunes with Paul. These two travelled by land to Derbe and Lystra,

¹ Acts xv. 36-39. ² The only further allusion to him is in 1 Cor. ix. 6.

³ 2 Cor. i. 19; 1 Thess. i. 1.

⁴ Acts xv. 22-30.

passing through Tarsus probably by the way, and crossing the Taurus range, no doubt, by the Cilician Gates, one of the wild-est and most difficult of mountain passes. On reaching Lystra, Paul took a second companion, a youth named Timothy, to whom he formed in time a very strong attachment. Strangely enough, this brought up the old question of circumcision again, which seemed to have been settled once for all a few weeks before at Jerusalem. Timothy had a Jewish mother, but a Greek father, and the Jews, knowing this and discovering that he had never been circumcised, made so much clamor that the matter came up again in a more practical form than ever. Should Paul come to open quarrel with the Jews, or should he yield the point as immaterial? So far as we can see, the same principle was involved as in the case of Titus;¹ and from the strong attitude which Paul took then, and the still stronger feeling which he expressed afterwards in his letter describing that incident,² we are not a little surprised to read in Acts that Paul not only permitted Timothy to be circumcised, but performed the rite with his own hand.³ Shall we pronounce this wholly incredible, as many do, and declare that the author of Acts must have got hold of some false tradition?⁴ At first thought, it might certainly seem better to suppose a mistake in the narrative than to believe that Paul could do anything apparently so unworthy of him, and so like what he had just indignantly condemned in Peter.⁵ Yet we must not decide what Paul did, by what we think he ought to have done; and as the account stands, we have to conclude that the opposition from the Jewish side of the church was so great that even Paul had for once to yield. Perhaps, if we knew all the circumstances, our judgment of him would not be so severe.

After leaving these scenes of his earlier labors, and preaching for a time in Phrygia and Galatia, Paul was anxious to visit the coasts of the Euxine and Mediterranean seas, but was prevented by some unknown cause, at which the narrative obscurely

¹ Gal. ii. 3.

² Gal. v. 2.

³ Acts xvi. 3.

⁴ Hausrath, p. 261; Bible for Learners, iii. 555.

⁵ Gal. ii. 11, 12.

hints.¹ Possibly he found himself still pursued by the enemies whom he had made at Antioch, to whose hostility he often alludes in his letters. At the same time, one of the visions by which he was so often guided, incited him to forget his discouragements, and cross the seas into Europe, where these hostile influences might be escaped.² A most fortunate resolve, as it proved; for it brought him among new races and new problems, and opened to him the most interesting part of his career.

Just at this point another companion seems to have joined him, who kept a written journal of events, which the writer of Acts afterwards incorporated into his narrative, and which forms the most trustworthy portion of the book. We infer this, not from any mention of the fact by the writer, but because the pronoun *he* or *they*, which has been used up to this point, changes suddenly into the pronoun *we*,³ to change back again just as abruptly, by and by, into *they*, and then again, from time to time, into *we*.⁴ In these days, such passages would be indicated by quotation-marks, and we should be told who wrote them; but in those times the art of composition, as we see, was much more primitive, and we must get along as well as we can without quotation-marks,—and for that matter (so far as original documents are concerned), without punctuation-marks or capitals. Who this companion was, we can only guess, as his name is never given. Possibly it was Luke, to whom the entire book and one of the Gospels were afterwards ascribed.⁵ Perhaps he was a native of Macedonia, and the one who persuaded Paul to cross into Europe; though according to later church traditions, Luke was born in Antioch.⁶

The party sailed from Troas, touched at the island Samothracia, then landed at Neapolis, an important trading-port, and went at once to Philippi, a military colony among the hills,

¹ Acts. xvi. 6, 7..

² Acts xvi. 9, 10. Compare xviii. 9; xxii. 17, 18; xxvi. 19; ix. 12; 2 Cor. xii. 1-4; also, Life of F. D. Maurice, i. 82. ³ Acts xvi. 10.

⁴ These passages are xvi. 10-xvii. 1; xx. 5-xxi. 18; xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16.

⁵ For this point, see Lesson xv.

"the chief city of that part of Macedonia."¹ Here Paul was on new ground, with tokens of Roman civilization and worship all around him. One of his later biographers imagines the amusement the party must have found in approaching the city, as they passed the temple and grotesque images of the rustic god *Silvanus*, whose name one of their comrades bore.² There was no synagogue in Philippi, but a few Jews were there, and the travellers joined a little band of them, who met, on the Sabbath, by the river-side. Here some female converts were made, one of whom, Lydia, a seller of purple, has come down to posterity as the person in whose house Paul and his companions lived while in Philippi. Although safe here from the persecutions of the Jews, yet new troubles soon arose. A young girl, possessed of some power of divination, and considering herself inspired by Apollo,³ pursued the disciples every day, greeting them with loud shouts as ministers, like herself, of some great god.⁴ Paul was disturbed at last by her clamor, and, acting upon the belief that she was really possessed by some heathen deity or demon hostile to the true God, commanded the spirit to leave her: the result being that the girl was so affected that her power was gone. According to the belief of the times, in which Paul evidently shared, "the spirit came out of her."⁵ The masters of the girl, incensed at losing the profits they had made out of her extraordinary gifts, stirred up the populace against Paul and Silas, and had them beaten as mischief-making Jews, and cast into prison, where their feet were placed in the stocks. At midnight, as Paul and Silas sang God's praises together, a great earthquake shook the walls of the prison, flung open the doors, and even broke the chains by which the prisoners were bound, leaving them free to escape. The superstitious jailer, seeing in this, as the disciples themselves did, a miraculous interposition in the prisoners' behalf,

¹ Acts xvi. 11, 12.

² Farrar's Paul, i. 485.

³ Acts xvi. 16. "Having the spirit of Pytho," — a name of Apollo, as god of oracles.

⁴ Acts xvi. 17.

⁵ Acts xvi. 18. Compare Meyer's Comm. on this passage.

begged to be baptized at once, with his family; while the magistrates, finding that the apostles were Roman citizens, brought them out from prison and begged them to leave the city.¹

From Philippi they travelled, through lovely scenery, first to Amphipolis, then to Thessalonica, the capital of Macedonia, and most important commercial city on the coast. The book of Acts tells us only that they remained three weeks in Thessalonica, preached each Sabbath in the synagogue, and were finally driven from the city by the Jews and certain "lewd fellows of the baser sort," because they did "contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, saying that there is another king, one Jesus."² In Paul's epistles, however, we have a most touching account of his relations with the Thessalonians, showing that he held them particularly dear, and that he had labored night and day while among them, so as not to be a burden upon them,³ and was saved from actual suffering only by generous contributions sent him again and again from Philippi.⁴

From Thessalonica, they fled by night to Berea, an obscure town on the slope of the Olympian mountains. In Berea, their reception must have been more kindly than elsewhere, as the people were remembered as "more noble than those in Thessalonica;" but their former enemies pursued them still, and Paul was forced to flee, while Silas and Timothy, who had perhaps excited less opposition, remained behind.⁵ Paul was taken to the sea-coast, and sailed for Athens.⁶

At Athens, for the first time in his missionary experiences, Paul found no opposition whatever, though he went about freely among the people, disputing in the synagogue with Jews and believers, and arguing daily with the Athenians in the market-place. Indeed, there was far too little excitement at his presence. "His spirit was stirred within him" by the multitude of altars and images which he saw on every hand, and which were to him, not objects of beauty, but simply tokens of idolatry;

¹ Acts xvi. 19-40.

² Acts xvii. 1-9.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 1-11; 2 Thess. iii. 8-10.

⁴ Phil. iv. 16.

⁵ Acts xvii. 10-14.

⁶ Acts xvii. 15.

but the Athenians listened to his remonstrances only with good-natured indifference. When he spoke to them of Jesus and the Resurrection, they thought these were the names of two new gods which he wished to introduce,¹ and brought him to the Areopagus, that he might gratify their curiosity still further. Paul had many beautiful things to say to their philosophers, if the book of Acts gives an accurate report of his address. Taking an inscription which he had seen on one of their altars, "To an unknown God,"² he reminds them that the real God does not dwell in temples, and quotes one of their own poets to prove to them that all men are God's children, and that they therefore should not think of God, their Father, as an image made of gold or silver or stone.³ But it does not appear that the philosophers gave him any serious attention; they only mocked his earnest words, and left him. No church was founded at Athens, and Paul himself never refers in any way to his visit there, or speaks of the place or people in any of his letters. We can easily imagine that his stay there gave him little pleasure.

In Corinth, where he next went, he found much more to detain him. The ancient Corinth of classic times no longer existed; but the traffic across the isthmus had created a new city of great commercial activity, where tradesmen from various parts congregated, and where many Jews, lately driven from Rome, had taken refuge. It was a riotous, corrupt Greek city, whose excesses gave occasion afterwards for some of Paul's severest rebukes,⁴ and whose bold speculations upon the doctrines he taught called out his highest eloquence.⁵ Here Paul remained a year and a half, preaching and working at his trade as a tent-maker, and sharing his home and profits with two refugees from Rome, Aquila and Priscilla, who were of the same craft.⁶ In the course of time the Jews tried to excite the fears of the Roman governor, Gallio, against Paul; and although

¹ Acts xviii. 18.

² Many such altars are mentioned by classic writers; probably erected in cases where it was doubtful from what special deity the favor or protection came.

³ Acts xvii. 19-31.

⁵ 1 Cor. xiii., xv.

⁴ 1 Cor. v., xi.

⁶ Acts xviii. 1-11.

Gallio, with entire indifference, refused to enter into any such sectarian Jewish wrangles, it is possible that the trouble thus caused led to Paul's final departure from Corinth and return to Antioch.¹

The writer of Acts, who loses no opportunity of showing how loyal to the ancient rites Paul still was, in spite of his anti-Jewish teachings, tells us that Paul shaved his head before starting, in fulfilment of a Jewish vow,² and took a special journey to Jerusalem, on his way home, to be present there at a Jewish feast.³

Supposing this journey to have taken about three years (though the only statement of time is in chap. xviii. ver. 11), Paul returned to Antioch about A.D. 54.

REFERENCES.

Farrar's Paul, vol. i; Bunsen's Bibelwerk, viii. 410; Hanson's Apostle Paul; Baur's Paul, vol. i; Zeller's Acts of the Apostles; Lewin's Life and Epistles of St. Paul, vol. i; Sunday-school Times, Philadelphia, Feb. 16, 1884 (Article by Prof. Goodwin on The Athens of St. Paul); Noyes's Theological Essays (Jowett); Raphael's Cartoons,—Paul at Athens.

QUESTIONS.

1. Point out on the map the route of Paul's second journey.
2. Who were his companions on this journey?
3. Why did Barnabas leave him?
4. Tell all that is known about Barnabas, and what you think of his character.
5. How does Paul appear in his relations with him?
6. Who joined them in Lystra, and to what incident did this lead?
7. Give your view of Paul's conduct in this case.
8. What led Paul to cross over into Europe?
9. What change is there in the language of the narrative in Acts at this point, and how explain it?
10. Show the passages in this lesson in which the pronoun *we* is used.
11. By whom may we suppose these passages to have been written?
12. Is the same person likely to have written these passages and the rest of the book?

¹ Acts xviii. 12-18.

² See Num. vi. 5.

³ Acts xviii. 18, 21.

18. Point out Philippi on the map, and describe the journey thither.
14. What took place in Philippi ? 15. What peculiar beliefs of the times does the story of the damsel show ? 16. Point out Thessalonica on the map, and tell what happened there as given in the Acts.
17. What do we learn of this visit from Paul's letters ? 18. Where is Berea, and what is told in the Acts of their stay there ? 19. How was Paul received in Athens, and how did he spend his time there ?
20. Give what you can of his speech on the Areopagus. 21. Point out the Areopagus on a map of Athens. 22. What was the result of Paul's visit to Athens ? 23. How long and with whom was Paul at Corinth, and how was he occupied ? 24. Why did he leave, and by what route did he return to Antioch ? 25. Date of his return ?

VIII.

PAUL IN EPHESUS.

(*Third Journey.*)

A.D. 54-57. Acts xix.

AMONG the cities of Asia Minor which Paul had visited in his missionary journeyings, the most important was Ephesus, capital of the Roman province of Asia and commercial centre of that part of the Mediterranean coast. This Ionic region was one of the earliest homes of the Greek race,¹ and had exerted much influence in ancient times on the civilization and art of Greece itself; but now it shared in the general deterioration and corruption of the Roman period. Here was one of the largest and most celebrated temples in the world, supported by the rich inland fisheries of the region, and consecrated to a local goddess whom the Greeks called Artemis (or Diana), but who had more resemblance to the eastern deity Cybele, and was worshipped with fantastic and extravagant rites. The temple has been wholly destroyed, but descriptions remain, showing that it was four times larger than the Parthenon at Athens. According to some reports, the graceful Ionic style of architecture, which is known to have had its birth in these regions, was first brought to perfection in building this temple.² Miniature copies of it, in silver or other metals, were sold in great numbers in Ephesus, to be placed in houses or carried on journeys as talismans. In general, Ephesus was full of superstition and idolatry, and soothsaying and magic arts were in high favor.

For a long time there had been a Jewish synagogue in Ephesus, and it is possible that Christian doctrines, though not of

¹ See Curtius's Hist. of Greece, vol. i., chap. i.

² Conybeare and Howson, ii. 86, note; quotation from Hirt's treatise on the Temple of Diana.

Paul's kind, had reached there before Paul's arrival. It appears, too, that some of John the Baptist's followers were in Ephesus, having kept together after their master's death, and holding a very singular and not wholly intelligible relation to the disciples of Jesus. Possibly they agreed with the Christians in looking for the Messiah at once and in regarding the Baptist as his forerunner, yet did not accept *Jesus* as the Messiah. In any case, they formed a separate body of believers, knew of no other baptism than John's, and when asked about the Holy Spirit, which the early disciples regarded as something specially conferred at baptism and bringing with it peculiar gifts of speech, they answered that they did not know there was such a thing. Being baptized, Paul laid his hands on them, and "the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spake with tongues and prophesied."¹ Among these Baptists was an eloquent Alexandrian Jew, named Apollos, who had already preached much about the coming of the Messiah, but knew little of the new Christian doctrines. Just before Paul's coming to Ephesus, Aquila and Priscilla, who were living then in Ephesus, had instructed him in the faith and sent him to Corinth, where he soon had as many followers as Paul himself, and formed a party of his own.²

Paul had stopped at Ephesus on his return from Corinth, and had stayed long enough to reason with the Jews in the synagogue.³ Now, after a short visit to Antioch, he returned to Ephesus, visiting the churches of Galatia and Phrygia on the way, and going over nearly the same route, apparently, as on his second journey. At Ephesus he remained for two or three years,⁴—his longest stay in any one place. It is interesting to see that for three months he preached in the Jewish synagogue, before any separation between Jews and Christians took place that made it necessary to go elsewhere. Finally some hard feeling arose between them, and the disciples of Jesus held their gatherings by themselves, in the school of a Greek teacher, Tyrannus.⁵ Here Paul preached and taught during the rest

¹ Acts xix. 1-6.

² Acts xviii. 24-28; 1 Cor. i. 12.

³ Acts xviii. 19-21.

⁴ Acts xix. 10; xx. 31.

⁵ Acts xix. 8, 9.

of his stay, going about also among the people from house to house, "serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations . . . by the lying in wait of the Jews."¹

We get our most vivid idea of the life he was leading in Ephesus, however, and of his untiring missionary activity, not from the narrative in Acts, but on finding from other sources that in seven or eight different cities of this region -- north, east, and south of Ephesus -- churches were founded about this time, with some of which, at least, Paul stood in very familiar relations, and all of which he must have had a hand in establishing. The "Seven churches in Asia" of the Book of Revelation, — the churches of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea, — with one or two others, alluded to in the Epistles, were no doubt either gathered by Paul himself, or founded by messengers whom he sent out from Ephesus. If this is so, the mere list of their names testifies to the importance of these three years to the early history of Christianity.

At the same time Paul was severely exercised by troubles, not alluded to in Acts, which were springing up in the churches he had already planted elsewhere. It is a sad feature of the history of these times, that the obstacles to the growth of Christianity consisted quite as much in misunderstandings and hostilities within the church as in direct opposition from without. These trials, as we have seen, Paul encountered from the very first. Some of the older disciples never forgave him for throwing the door so wide open to the Gentiles, and allowing his own countrymen so few advantages over others. Although the conference at Jerusalem seemed at the time to heal all party animosities, yet, as soon as Paul attempted again to carry on his work in his own way, the same jealousies pursued him. It would almost seem, from passages in his epistles, as if pains were taken to follow him from place to place, and immediately after his departure from any church, to excite his own followers'

¹ Acts xx. 19, 20.

prejudice against him. With the great influence belonging to the mother-church at Jerusalem, this was not difficult, as Paul found at Antioch and learned often afterwards.

His letter to the Galatians, which has already been spoken of¹ and which was probably written from Ephesus, is full of allusions to these troubles. These churches had been in existence, at most, four or five years; yet already he had to say to them, "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you . . . unto another gospel." "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ crucified hath been so plainly set forth?"² "There be some," he says, "who trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ."³ That these troublesome persons were not outside the church, but within it, trying to win the Galatians away from Paul's teachings to the old Jewish customs, appears from verses like these: "After ye have known God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?" "Ye observe days and months and times and years."⁴ Paul even hints that these mischief-makers were not sincere in their faith, but were only persuading the Galatians to conform to the Jewish law for appearances' sake: "As many as desire to make a fair show in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised." "For neither they themselves who are circumcised keep the law; but desire to have you circumcised, that they may glory in your flesh."⁵ To have his own followers turned against him as a false teacher was evidently one of the hardest trials which Paul had to bear, and it calls out occasionally his bitterest reproaches. "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" "If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."⁶

From Corinth somewhat similar tidings came; and messengers seem to have been passing back and forth during most of his stay in Ephesus, reporting to him divisions and discords in the

¹ Lesson vi.

² Gal. i. 6; iii. 1.

³ Gal. i. 7.

⁴ Gal. iv. 9, 10.

⁵ Gal. vi. 12, 13.

⁶ Gal. iv. 16; i. 8, 9.

Corinthian church, and carrying back letters of warning or reproof to them. Of these letters, one or two seem to have been lost;¹ but two have been saved, and give a striking picture of the troubles which had arisen there and of Paul's deep emotion at learning of them. Four parties had sprung up in Corinth, it seems, and threatened to tear the little church asunder. One of these remained true to Paul himself; another set the authority of the older apostles against his, and called itself by the name of Peter; a third had gathered around Apollos, drawn by his eloquence or learning; a fourth, made up possibly of Galilæans and others who claimed to have seen Jesus, or at least would accept no authority but his, stood apart from the others, as the true "disciples of Christ."² With these Paul earnestly pleads for harmony. "Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"³ Busybodies were in Corinth, too, bringing against him the old charges about circumcision, with the new ones added that he allowed intermarriage with heathen, and encouraged the eating of forbidden meats.⁴ They reminded the people, too, that Paul had never seen Jesus, as the other apostles had, and had no right, therefore, to call himself an apostle.⁵ They even derided him for his personal appearance and lack of the graces of oratory for which Apollos and others were so noted.⁶ It is pitiful to think that one who had sacrificed so much to the new faith as Paul had done, and who was simply striving (as he believed and as the event has proved) to save Christianity from being lost again in Judaism, must be the subject of such petty misconceptions and have to defend himself against narrow partisans in his own ranks. We cannot wonder that he occasionally breaks out into severe and indignant personal replies. "With me," he says, "it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment."⁷ "These are false prophets, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of

¹ 1 Cor. v. 9.

² 1 Cor. i. 12.

³ 1 Cor. i. 13.

⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 18, 19; vii. 12-17; viii. 4-13; x. 25-31.

⁵ 1 Cor. ix. 1; 2 Cor. xi. 5; xiii. 11.

⁶ 1 Cor. ii. 4; 2 Cor. x. 10; xi. 6.

⁷ 1 Cor. iv. 3.

Christ." "Are they Hebrews? so am I. Are they Israelites? so am I. Are they ministers of Christ? I am more."¹ It makes the case no better if we are to infer from these last quotations that the foes who pursued him so relentlessly were not merely "ministers of Christ" themselves, but claimed to represent the apostles of Jesus.

Besides these anxieties from abroad, Paul found himself in great trouble in Ephesus from the sorcerers who were so common there, and whose trade he had interfered with by preaching against idolatry.² Some of the reports of his doings were no doubt much exaggerated by the excited populace; as, for instance, that he had triumphed over the magicians by meeting them on their own ground and showing himself a better sorcerer than they.³ But at last he fell into serious peril. One of the chief sources of profit at Ephesus,— the making of silver shrines for Diana,— Paul's teaching had really endangered; and a silversmith, Demetrius, succeeded in stirring up his own craftsmen, and then in exciting the whole city against Paul and his companions. Shouting "Great is Diana of the Ephesians," they rushed to the theatre, dragging with them such Christians as they could seize, and terrifying them by angry shouts and threats. Fortunately there was no leader to the mob, and few of them knew what they had come to the theatre for; so that the town-officer, as soon as he got a hearing, had little trouble in dispersing them.⁴ Paul was hurried away by his disciples as soon as the rioting began,⁵ and so came to no harm. But as he speaks afterwards of having "fought with beasts at Ephesus,"⁶ he must have been in great peril, either on this occasion or on some other, not mentioned in Acts, and found his further stay in Ephesus impossible. In any case, he left the city immediately, never to return.⁷

This was probably about A.D. 57.

¹ 2 Cor. xi. 13, 22, 23.

² Acts xix. 23-26.

³ Acts xix. 12-16.

⁴ Acts xix. 28-41.

⁵ Acts xix. 30.

⁶ 1 Cor. xv. 32.

⁷ Acts xx. 1.

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QUESTIONS.

1. Point out Ephesus on the map, and tell what you can of its history. 2. What great temple was there, and how much do we know about it? 3. Who was Apollos, and to what religious body did he belong? 4. How did the disciples of John the Baptist differ from those of Jesus? 5. When did Paul come to Ephesus, and how long did he live there? 6. Where did he preach while there? 7. How long did he preach in the synagogue, and what idea does this give of the relations then between Christians and Jews? 8. Show on the map where the "Seven churches of Asia" were. 9. What had Paul probably to do with these? 10. What troubles do Paul's letters from Ephesus disclose? 11. Is there any account of these troubles in the Acts?

12. What difficulties seem to have arisen in the churches of Galatia? 13. Repeat passages from the Epistle to the Galatians referring to this. 14. What idea do these passages give you of Paul's opponents? 15. What parties had arisen in the Corinthian church? 16. What charges had been made there against Paul? 17. Quote passages referring to this. 18. What light does this throw upon Paul's character and work? 19. What excitement arose against Paul in Ephesus? 20. Describe the incident as told in Acts. 21. How did Paul escape? 22. Give the date of his stay in Ephesus.

IX.

PAUL'S EARLIER EPISTLES.

PAUL's long visit at Ephesus is chiefly interesting to us, as we have seen, from the fact that his first letters are supposed to have been written from that place. These letters are of the greatest value for their religious and moral teachings; but they are of almost equal importance for the light they throw, incidentally, upon Paul's life and the history of the times. Some are unquestionably ascribed to him which are not his;¹ many actually written by him have been lost; but those which remain are invaluable, especially as the book of Acts goes so little into detail, and draws so little from the personal observation of eye-witnesses. This is the right place, therefore, to examine the earlier epistles.

The earliest of all, and the first of all Christian writings, were probably the first and second epistles to the Thessalonians; though in the case of all these letters, we have to remember that no dates were given at the time, and we must determine them, as best we can, by conjecture. We can never be quite sure we are right, yet in the case of these two letters there is but little doubt.

Paul visited Thessalonica, as you remember, on first going into Macedonia and Greece, during his second journey. The book of Acts devotes but a few verses to this visit,² but the affectionate and confidential tone of the epistles shows that he was certainly with the Thessalonians long enough to have formed very intimate ties of friendship.³ Paul wrote his first letter to them from Corinth,⁴ as he speaks of Timothy as having just come to him from Thessalonica,⁵ and we know from the book of Acts

¹ Compare 2 Thess. ii. 2.

⁴ About A.D. 53.

² Acts xvii. 1-9.

⁵ 1 Thess. iii. 6.

³ 1 Thess. ii. 7-12.

that Timothy joined him in Corinth.¹ His purpose in writing was to correct certain singular, yet very natural misapprehensions, into which, according to Timothy's account, the church had fallen. In preaching to the Thessalonians, Paul had had much to say about the "coming of the Lord," — an event universally expected by the disciples, and looked for at any moment. As Jesus had died without establishing the Messianic kingdom, they were sure he would come again to do it; and certain promises ascribed to him led them to expect his return during that generation.² This belief appears constantly in Paul's epistles, and no doubt appeared also in his preaching. Unfortunately, the Thessalonians had taken this expectation quite too literally, and were so excited by it that many of them neglected their business and families, and spent their time in discussing with each other when and how Christ would appear. Paul's first letter seems to have been written chiefly to calm this excitement, and to beg them "to study to be quiet, and to do their own business, and to work with their own hands;" and to remind them that, as Christ might come at any moment, they should prepare for the event by leading sober and holy lives.³ Another, still more singular question, showing how different their ideas of the future were from ours, troubled the Thessalonians extremely. Some of their number were growing old, and might at any moment die. Some had already died since Paul first told them of the Messiah's coming. What would become of these? They had been promised a share in the blessings of Christ's kingdom; yet how could this be, if they were dead? To us, with our ideas of death and heaven, such a question sounds absurd; but to the Thessalonians, to whom the kingdom was a visible one, and death a long repose in the under-world, it meant a great deal. Paul answers it (referring to some saying of Jesus not preserved in the Gospels), by assuring them that those who were alive at the coming of the Lord would have no precedence over (would not "prevent") those who were dead. "For the Lord himself shall descend

¹ Acts xviii. 5.² Matt. xvi. 28; xxiv. 34.³ 1 Thess. iv. 11; v. 1-8.

from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall first rise. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air.”¹ This is the most definite statement on this subject which the New Testament contains; and it has great interest for us as showing how slowly the old Jewish conception of the “kingdom of heaven” gave way to a more spiritual idea.

Some have supposed that Paul must have been speaking figuratively in this passage, however literal his words may seem; but evidently the Thessalonians did not so understand him. His second letter, written probably soon after the first, shows that there were still restless and idle persons among them, teaching them to neglect their worldly affairs. “For we hear,” he says, “that there are some among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.”² Others had apparently used much eloquence to convince them that “the day of Christ was at hand,” and shown forged letters from Paul, encouraging them in idleness.³ Paul urged them, therefore, “not to be shaken in mind or troubled” by any such representations; assuring them that the coming of the Lord would be preceded by unmistakable signs, so that all could be prepared. First, there would be a “falling away” among believers,⁴ and then a “man of sin,” or Antichrist, would appear, whom the Lord would destroy by the brightness of his coming.⁵ This idea of the Antichrist was based on obscure passages in the book of Daniel;⁶ and there is reason to think that the Christians of that time connected it somehow with the Roman government, as the emperor Caligula had just before this compelled the Romans to worship him in their temples, and had threatened to place his statue in the temple at Jerusalem. These letters were written just as Nero was coming into power. Perhaps he was expected to accomplish what Caligula had threatened, and so was called the

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 15-17.

² 2 Thess. iii. 11.

³ 2 Thess. ii. 2.

⁴ Compare 1 Tim. iv. 1; 2 Peter, ii. 1.

⁵ 2 Thess. ii. 8-10.

⁶ Dan. viii. 12, 23; xi. 24, 30, 32; Matt. xxiv. 15.

Antichrist.¹ But the passage is the most enigmatical in Paul's writings; either because he had already spoken on the subject to the Thessalonians,² or because for political reasons he thought it necessary to conceal his meaning.³

Paul's epistle to the Galatians, which has already been referred to,⁴ was probably written from Ephesus, about A.D. 56. Singularly enough, although this is one of Paul's most important letters, and is more personal and confidential in its tone than almost any other, we cannot tell with any certainty where the "churches of Galatia" were, or when Paul visited them. All that the book of Acts has to say about Galatia is in two very vague passages,⁵ where not even the names of the towns or cities are given. This silence seems so strange that many have supposed the churches at Antioch, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe, visited in Paul's first and second journeys, to be meant; places which lay, not in the geographical district of Galatia, but in the Roman province of that name. But the writer of Acts evidently did not think so, nor are these political names commonly used in the New Testament. So there are difficulties in both theories; though it seems on the whole more likely that Galatia means the wild region in the central part of Asia Minor, called Galatia on the maps, and that the author of Acts tells us no more about Paul's visit there because he could not find out any more. But the question, like many others of equal importance, must be left undecided, as it is foolish to pretend to be sure where we are not.⁶

Whoever the Galatians may have been, some one had been among them, as we have seen,⁷ who had won their confidence and led them to distrust Paul's teachings.⁸ Judging from

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 6.

² 2 Thess. ii. 5.

³ Compare Hausrath, pp. 294-295; Farrar, i. 608-617.

⁴ Lesson vi.

⁵ Chap. xvi. 6; xviii. 23.

⁶ Compare Hausrath and Renan, for the Roman province; Lightfoot (Introduc. to Gal.) and Farrar (St. Paul, i. 465; 229-240), on the other side.

⁷ Lesson viii.

⁸ Gal. i. 6. Compare Lightfoot's Galatians, p. 300.

Paul's language,¹ these attacks upon himself had been of a very unscrupulous kind, and the Galatians had begun to doubt whether any one who taught such strange doctrines could be an apostle at all. To meet these charges, Paul tells them that the gospel he preached was not taught him by the apostles at Jerusalem, nor by any human teachers, but came to him by independent revelation;² that he did not go to Jerusalem for three years, and then only to see Peter;³ and that when he met the other apostles, fourteen years later, he received no instruction from them, but, on the contrary, succeeded in convincing them that his gospel to the Gentiles was right.⁴ This being so, he begs the Galatians not to return to Jewish observances, or "works of the law," but to put their faith in Christ instead.⁵ Followers of Christ, he claims, were the true seed of Abraham,—a point which he tries to prove from the Jewish Scriptures themselves, in a way which showed that he had not forgotten his rabbinical training in Jerusalem.⁶ To practise circumcision after becoming Christians, or still to observe the sabbaths and feast-days, was going back from freedom into bondage, and losing all that Jesus had brought them.⁷ Most of his letters Paul simply dictated and signed;⁸ but this he took pains to write himself, and jested, as he closed, about his big and unsightly handwriting.⁹

The first epistle to the Corinthians was written from Ephesus, soon after the above.¹⁰ We have seen what strong personal feeling the epistle shows on Paul's part towards those who were pursuing him from place to place;¹¹ but other causes seem also to have led him to write. Grave moral offences had

¹ Gal. i. 8, 9; v. 12.

² Gal. i. 11, 12.

³ Gal. i. 15-18.

⁴ Gal. ii. 1-9.

⁵ Gal. iii.

⁶ Gal. iii. 16, 29. Paul claims that the word "seed," in such passages as Gen. xii. 7, xiii. 15, is a singular noun, and therefore must refer to Christ; whereas it is just as much a collective term ("posteriority") in Hebrew or Greek as in English. The whole chapter is in this purely rabbinical strain.

⁷ Gal. iv. 9, 10; v. 1-4.

⁸ 2 Thess. iii. 17.

⁹ Gal. vi. 11: "See! with what big letters," etc. Paul may have found writing irksome, or perhaps could not write the Greek characters easily. Meyer (on this passage) gives another explanation.

¹⁰ About A.D. 57.

¹¹ Lesson viii.

sprung up in the corrupt atmosphere of Corinth, and Paul wrote to beg his followers to punish the offenders at once, without going before the Gentile courts.¹ Other questions of a less serious nature were troubling the excitable Corinthians. Was marriage to be permitted in the new kingdom?² When husband and wife differed in faith, should they be divorced?³ Were slaves to be set free?⁴ Was it right to eat meat which had been offered to idols, and which was then sold in the markets?⁵ Were women to appear unveiled, like the Greeks, or veiled, as the Jews, at their gatherings and devotions?⁶ Were women to speak in public at all?⁷ All these questions Paul answers with great decision, sometimes claiming that his precepts were from Jesus,⁸ oftener giving them on his own authority.⁹ Great excesses had sprung up, too, at their love-feasts, as the Lord's Supper was then called,¹⁰—daily meals, to which each brought his portion of meat and drink, to be shared by all. These had become the scenes of shameful gluttony and drunkenness, each one looking out for himself, and forgetting to give any sacred or memorial character to the supper at all. Paul begs those who are able to do so, to eat and drink at home before coming, and not put their poorer companions to shame.¹¹ Another very embarrassing difficulty was caused by a certain class of ardent disciples who prided themselves on what they called their "gift of tongues," an excited, incoherent raving which they mistook for pious inspiration, but which Paul reminded them was far less useful than many other less imposing, but more intelligible gifts. His comments upon this practice almost provoke a smile. However profound the wisdom these worshippers uttered, though God might understand it, man, he declared, certainly could not; and to those who listened to them they seemed to be "speaking into the air," and were like pipes or harps which should make noises without playing

¹ 1 Cor. v., vi.² 1 Cor. vii. 1-11; 25-40.⁸ 1 Cor. vii. 12-17.⁴ 1 Cor. vii. 20-24.⁵ 1 Cor. x. 18-33.⁶ 1 Cor. xi. 3-16.⁷ 1 Cor. xiv. 34, 35.⁸ 1 Cor. vii. 10.⁹ 1 Cor. vii. 6, 12, 40.¹⁰ Jude 12.¹¹ 1 Cor. xi. 20-34.

any tunes. For his part, though he professed great respect for their piety, Paul declared that "he would rather speak five words with his understanding, than ten thousand with tongues."¹ Although Paul treated this remarkable accomplishment with so little gravity, it seems to have been held in high esteem in other quarters, and to have been thought by some a special sign of the Holy Spirit.² In Corinth, it evidently caused some heart-burnings among the disciples, and this drew from Paul one of the most touching and exquisite appeals for mutual charity ever written.³ No other letter is so full of eloquent outbursts as the first epistle to the Corinthians, nor would it be easy to find in all literature a nobler passage than the fifteenth chapter, where Paul tried to answer the questionings of his Greek converts or their antagonists on the subject of the resurrection. Could there be such a thing? they asked; or if so, how or in what body would the dead arise?—questions which Paul solves in the manner of the times, and in part in the mystic terms of his old rabbinical theology,⁴ but with unexampled power and splendor.⁵

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QUESTIONS

1. Which is considered the earliest of Paul's epistles?
2. What New Testament writing, if any, is older than this?
3. From what place did Paul write this letter, and how is this known?
4. Give the date, and tell how the dates of Paul's letters are determined.

¹ 1 Cor. xiv. 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 19.

² Acts ii. 4; x. 46; xix. 6.

³ 1 Cor. xiii.

⁴ 1 Cor. xv. 45-49.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 35-55.

5. What circumstances led to this letter? 6. What anxiety had the Thessalonians about those who had died, and what idea of the future does this show? 7. How did Paul answer them? 8. Do you think Paul was speaking figuratively, or literally? 9. What called out the Second Epistle to the Thessalonians? 10. What did Paul tell them, and how do you understand his words? 11. Quote the passage in either of these epistles that interests you most.

12. How much do we know of the Galatian churches? 13. Show on the map where you think they were. 14. When did Paul write to these churches, and from what place? 15. What called out the letter? 16. What has it to say about Paul's relations to the other apostles? 17. What about the observance of the Jewish law? 18. How were Paul's letters usually written, and what peculiarity was there in this case? 19. When and whence was the First Epistle to the Corinthians written? 20. Mention some of the questions which this epistle takes up, and quote some of Paul's answers. 21. What troubles had arisen at the Lord's Supper? 22. What was the "gift of tongues," and what has Paul to say about it? 23. Quote some passage from chap. xiii., and show the connection between this chapter and the others. 24. Tell what questionings brought out chap. xv., and how Paul meets them.

X.

SECOND VISIT TO GREECE.

(*Third Journey.*)

A.D. 58-59. Acts xx., xxi.

ON escaping from Ephesus,¹ with great peril to his life,² Paul went to Troas where he hoped to meet Titus with tidings from Corinth; but failing to do so, "having no rest in his spirit" until he saw Titus, he crossed over again into Macedonia to seek him.³ Here again the same restlessness and distress of mind tormented him, not to be quieted until Titus rejoined him with comforting news from Corinth. "When we were come into Macedonia our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side; without were fightings, within were fears."⁴

This unusual mental suffering is explained when we find that his former letter to the Corinthians had caused great excitement among them;⁵ either through his severe rebukes,⁶ or because of the punishment which he had urged them to inflict upon certain wrong-doers,⁷ and which the Corinthians thought too harsh.⁸ His opponents, too, had proved more malicious than ever, ridiculing his person,⁹ and setting themselves up as the true disciples of Christ against him as a mere pretender.¹⁰

Under these circumstances, Paul did not venture to visit Corinth again until he had first written to them, to calm their irritation and his own.¹¹ So what we call the Second Epistle to

¹ Less. viii. ² 2 Cor. i. 8-10.

³ Acts xx. 1; 2 Cor. ii. 12-13.

⁴ 2 Cor. vii. 5-7.

⁵ 2 Cor. vii. 8-11.

⁶ 1 Cor. iii. 2, 3; iv. 8, 18-21; xi. 17-22; 2 Cor. xii. 20.

⁷ 1 Cor. v. 1-5.

⁸ 2 Cor. vi. 14-18; vii. 12; xii. 21.

⁹ 2 Cor. x. 10; xi. 6.

¹⁰ 2 Cor. xi. 4, 5, 13, 22, 23.

¹¹ 2 Cor. i. 23; ii. 1; xiii. 10.

the Corinthians was written, perhaps from Philippi,¹ and sent by Titus and two companions.² This was about A.D. 58. He tells them that he had written before only out of love to them. "Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears, not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you."³ "Though I made you sorry with a letter," he adds, "I do not repent, though I did repent. . . . I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed unto repentance."⁴ After these expressions of deep personal feeling, he tells them of a contribution which the churches of Macedonia had made for the poor brethren at Jerusalem,⁵ to which he hopes they will add;⁶ and then recurs, in stronger language of denunciation than he is wont to use, to the personal enemies who had fomented the bitterness against him. They had declared that "his letters are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence weak and his speech contemptible." He replies, "Let such an one think this, that such as we are absent, such will we be also in deed when we are present."⁷ They had declared themselves apostles of Christ, or sent by the apostles; he declares them "false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into apostles of Christ," and says, "I suppose I was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles."⁸ Against their claims of special authority, he brings up the inward revelations which came to him so often in the form of visions, and mentions one very extraordinary instance many years before, possibly at Damascus, where he was "caught up into paradise and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter."⁹ As connected somehow with these visions, he speaks of the peculiar physical suffering or deformity which has been alluded to before,¹⁰ and which he speaks of mysteriously as "a thorn in

¹ One had been written before the First Corinthians (1 Cor. v. 9), and possibly another, between the two which are preserved.

² 2 Cor. viii. 16-22. ³ 2 Cor. ii. 4. ⁴ 2 Cor. vii. 8, 9.

⁵ 2 Cor. viii. 1-4; Rom. xv. 26. ⁶ 2 Cor. viii. 6, 7; ix. 1-12.

⁷ 2 Cor. x. 10, 11.

⁸ 2 Cor. xi. 5, 13.

⁹ 2 Cor. xii. 1-6.

¹⁰ Less. ii.

the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me.”¹ Whatever he means by this, it was something which caused him great mortification and pain, and against which he had to struggle through life. “For this thing I besought the Lord thrice that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, my grace is sufficient for thee : for my strength is made perfect in weakness.”² Altogether, Paul never seems so heroic as under the persecutions of enemies, the misunderstanding of friends, the profound mental sufferings and bodily tortures which this letter to the Corinthians reveals. “Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ’s sake : for when I am weak then am I strong.”³

After sending this last letter to Corinth, Paul soon followed it himself. The book of Acts says simply, “he came into Greece and remained there three months,” without mentioning the particular place ;⁴ but as each of his letters speaks of his hope of going to Corinth again,⁵ we must imagine him spending most of the three months there, arranging the affairs of his troubled church. Indeed, he speaks in these passages of coming to them “a third time,”⁶ showing that there had been a second visit, of which the Acts makes no mention whatever.

Little as we know of this third visit to Corinth, it is of great interest to us as the time when the Epistle to the Romans was written. We infer this from such passages as Romans xv. 23–28, which show that when he wrote the letter he was about to go to Jerusalem to take contributions from Macedonia and Greece, which seems to point pretty clearly to Corinth about A.D. 59. Paul had long wished to go to Rome,⁷ for having been at the lesser capitals, Antioch and Ephesus, it naturally seemed to him important to preach his Gentile gospel at the

¹ 2 Cor. xii. 7.

² 2 Cor. xii. 8, 9.

³ 2 Cor. xii. 10.

⁴ Acts xx. 2, 3.

⁵ 1 Cor. xvi. 5, 6; 2 Cor. xii. 14, 20, 21; xiii. 1.

⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1.

⁷ Acts xix. 21; Rom. i. 13; xv. 23–29.

great centre of the Gentile world.¹ A few Christians, gathered perhaps by the personal friends whom Paul had made at Corinth and elsewhere, were already in Rome, and he wished to meet them face to face. Among them, as it seems, were many of the Jewish party, to whom Paul's views seemed destructive of the old faith,² if not of good morals,³ and to these he wished to explain his doctrines before visiting them. Indeed, these questions had at last become so pressing that Paul felt the necessity of stating his position more frankly and fully than he had ever done before. We may suppose, too, that the agitating controversies through which he had passed, had wrought all these ideas into more consistent form in his own mind, and that he was glad of an opportunity of giving them complete expression, — not by any means as a final system of faith, for which there was no special call at that time, or for that people, but simply to make himself perfectly understood. With some such feeling as this, he wrote the Epistle to the Romans, the least personal and most doctrinal of all his writings.

The Jewish law, Paul reminded the Romans, had not made men good. The world was full of wickedness,⁴ and Jews and Gentiles were sinful alike. The Psalmist was quite right⁵ in saying, “None is good, no not one.”⁶ The Gentiles of course were wicked, having no divine teaching to help them; but the Jews equally so, with such teaching. Indeed, Paul had evidently felt keenly, long before he became a Christian, how impossible it was to obey all the commands of the Jewish law. To attempt to do so only proved what a strong hold sin had upon the soul.⁷ The passages in which he describes the struggle in his soul between his desire to do all that was right, and his inability to accomplish it, are full of deepest pathos.⁸ From this mental turmoil he had found his escape by believing in Christ, and he held this to be the one thing necessary for Gentile and Jew alike.⁹ The death of Christ seemed to him, with his Jewish ideas, a sacrifice offered for all, and a propitia-

¹ Rom. i. 14, 15.

² Rom. ii. 17-20, 25.

³ Rom. iii. 8.

⁴ Rom. i.

⁵ Ps. xiv. 1.

⁶ Rom. iii. 10.

⁷ Rom. vii. 7, 8.

⁸ Rom. vii.

⁹ Rom. ii. 9-11.

tion for the sins of all.¹ How literally or how symbolically he held this belief, we cannot be sure, but he could not give up his entire Jewish faith at once, and this is one of the points to which he seems to cling very firmly. Instead of overcoming sin, therefore, by Jewish sacrifices and observances, sin was to be overcome by simple faith in Christ. Man became good, or "just" (which was the old Hebrew word),² not by the works of the law, but by this faith in Jesus Christ.³ This is what Paul meant by "justification by faith," which he makes so great a point of in the Epistle to the Romans.⁴ Luther, in his translation of the Bible, made Paul use much stronger language than he really does on this point,⁵ and since the Reformation, "justification by faith" has had much greater prominence given it than Paul ever intended. Paul simply wished to contrast it as strongly as possible with the Pharisaic idea of righteousness.

But if faith in Christ was all that was necessary, the question arose, what advantage had the Jew over any one else; and what became of the Scripture promises that the heavenly kingdom was for the Jews only?⁶ Paul was admitting more Gentiles than Jews into the new church; what did it mean? Paul could not deny that this seemed contrary to Scripture, and acknowledged how deeply the thought troubled him;⁷ but he tried to answer the Jews on their own ground, by Scripture arguments that sound strange enough to us, but were familiar among his rabbinical teachers. He reminded them that Abraham himself, their great ancestor, was counted just, or righteous (the two words are the same), not by works, but by faith, because he believed God.⁸ Besides, all were not really Israelites who were of the Israelite race; from the beginning, when God chose Jacob over Esau, simply because he loved him better, he had always favored some rather than others.⁹ We must not

¹ Rom. iii. 25.

² Habak. ii. 4; Gen. vi. 9; Job iv. 17.

³ Rom. i. 17; iii. 20-23.

⁴ Rom. iii. 28.

⁵ "Man is justified by faith alone," Rom. iii. 28.

⁶ Rom. iii. 1.

⁷ Rom. ix. 1-5.

⁸ Rom. iv. 1-3, 9.

question God in these matters,¹ but must believe that it was all to work out better things in the end. So the rejection of the Jews for their want of faith had brought the Gentiles into the kingdom, and might perhaps end, as he prayed it would, in bringing all the Jews in also.² "Blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in, and so all Israel shall be saved."³ These passages also have been used in later times to apply to the whole world, instead of to the Jews alone, as Paul intended ; and doctrines of "predestination," "election," etc., have been based on them,⁴ which would have seemed as strange to Paul as his mode of arguing seems to us. The only way to understand Paul is to remember that he had always been a Jew and had just become a Christian, and that with his new Christian beliefs he still mingled many of his old Jewish ideas. But beneath both the new faith and the old traditions is an intense moral earnestness, which proves that he was fast freeing himself from all the bondage of the letter.

In closing the epistle, Paul exhorts the Romans in very striking terms, to live virtuously and peaceably together, each using the gift that was given him,⁵ and not to become divided by unimportant disputes as to the observance of the Sabbath, or eating of certain meats, but to allow the largest liberty of opinion. Especially should those who, like himself, held the broadest views on these matters, be tolerant towards those of stricter opinions or weaker faith. "One believeth that he may eat all things, another, who is weak, eateth herbs." "One man esteemeth one day above another; another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be persuaded in his own mind."⁶

In closing his letter to the Romans, Paul speaks of his great desire to come and see them, but says he must first go to Jerusalem to carry a contribution which he had been collecting in

¹ Rom. ix. 14-18.

² Rom. ix. 30-33; x., xi.

³ Rom. xi. 25.

⁴ Rom. viii. 29, 30.

⁵ Rom. xii.

⁶ Rom. xiv. 1-5.

Macedonia and Greece for the poorer members of the Jerusalem church.¹ This journey he made immediately, passing along the coast of Asia Minor, and stopping at Miletus long enough to meet there the elders of the church at Ephesus.² The book of Acts adds that he was in haste to reach Jerusalem in time for the feast of Pentecost,³ but says nothing whatever of the contribution which he was to carry there.⁴ From his farewell words to his Ephesian friends, we can see that he feared some great peril at Jerusalem. "Behold I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there; save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me."⁵ When he left them, "they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more."⁶

These gloomy forebodings were quite justified. Although he went to Jerusalem on so humane an errand, the apostles who received him found him a most embarrassing visitor. They had to confide to him at once that his fellow-Christians in Jerusalem, who were "jealous of the law," held him in grave suspicion ; as they were informed that he "taught all the Jews which are among the Gentiles to forsake Moses, and not to walk after the customs."⁷ The apostles even feared for Paul's life at the hands of these excited foes. We can imagine the mortification with which they told their visitor, who for more than ten years had done such heroic service and passed through such sufferings and privations in the cause of Christ, that his life would not be safe among the Christians in Jerusalem, where Jesus had died, and where they themselves had been preaching without danger ever since.

Very strange seems to us, too, the device to which Paul's friends resorted to save him from violence. The multitudes, they said, will be sure to hear that you are here, and will come

¹ Rom. xv. 23-26; Acts xix. 21.

² Acts xx. 3-15.

⁴ See later, Acts xxiv. 17.

⁶ Acts xx. 37, 38.

³ Acts xx. 16.

⁵ Acts xx. 22, 23.

⁷ Acts xxi. 20, 21.

together at once. But here are four men who have taken the Nazarite vow, and are just about to fulfil it. If you now will join them, take the same vow, purify yourself with them, and bear the expense of the sacrifice they must bring to the priest, the people will see that you "walk orderly and keep the law," and so will leave you in peace.¹ Nothing could well seem more repugnant to Paul's principles than such a suggestion as this. To take the vow of the Nazarite meant, among a host of other ritual performances, to shave one's head, to remain otherwise unshaven through the whole period of consecration, to bring to the altar a he lamb, a ewe lamb, and a ram, with unleavened bread, oil-cakes, and oil-wafers, and finally, after seven days were passed, to be shaven publicly at the door of the tabernacle, and to throw a lock of one's hair upon the altar fire.² To imagine Paul going through this ceremony after all that he had said against the observance of the Mosaic laws, after reproaching the Galatians for "turning again to the weak and beggarly elements whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage,"³ and after so lately telling the Romans that "circumcision is of the heart and in the spirit, not in the letter," and that "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified,"⁴ is certainly very difficult. We cannot forget that he had taken Peter severely to task for yielding to Jewish prejudices in a much less offensive way.⁵ When we read in Acts, therefore, that Paul actually "took the men, and the next day purifying himself with them, entered into the temple to signify the accomplishment of the days of purification, until that an offering should be offered for every one of them,"⁶ our first impulse is to say that it cannot possibly be true. If Paul really went through all these rites himself, as the people supposed, he was inconsistent with his own previous assertions; if he only pretended to do so, he was acting a very insincere part. Many critics feel so strongly the timidity and hypocrisy of such conduct, that they regard this entire passage, with other similar

¹ Acts xxi. 22-24.

² Num. vi. 3-20.

³ Gal. iv. 9.

⁴ Rom. ii. 29; iii. 20.

⁵ Gal. ii. 11-14.

⁶ Acts xxi. 26.

allusions in Acts to Paul's observances of Jewish rites,¹ as an unfounded tradition, introduced to prove that Paul was less at variance with the other apostles than he really was. The question is certainly the most difficult one which the life of Paul presents. But we must not judge those days by our own; and are not at liberty to reject portions of the New Testament history simply because they surprise us. As the incident is given so minutely, and there is nothing in Paul's letters which absolutely contradicts it, there are no sound critical grounds for excluding it; and we feel obliged to set it down as showing how tremendous a conflict it was for a religious nature like Paul's to cut himself loose from the religion of his childhood. The harder it is for us to conceive of his taking such a step, the more clearly we understand the great crisis through which Paul himself and the Christian community were then passing. It shows how fondly he may still have clung, in spite of his theories, to many of the old practices, how differently he felt about them in different moods, how impossible it was for him, as for all others, to be always at his best. If the account is really true, we get some idea of what Paul meant when in a moment of great frankness he said, "I am made all things to all men."²

But whatever the exact facts may have been, the sagacious plan of the apostles met the fate which is apt to befall all such compromises. Before the seven days were over, some Jews from Asia who had known Paul in Ephesus or Galatia, caught sight of him in the temple, and immediately "stirred up all the people and laid hands on him, crying out: . . . This is the man that teacheth all men everywhere against the law and this place." They charged him also with bringing a Greek companion from Ephesus into the temple with him; so that "all the city was moved and the people ran together."³ Paul was dragged out of the temple by the exasperated Jews, beaten and almost killed, but snatched from them finally and chained by the Roman tribune, who mistook him for a fugitive of whom

¹ Acts xvi. 8; xviii. 18, 21; xx. 16.

² 1 Cor. ix. 22.

³ Acts xxi. 27-30.

they were in search. It so happened that an Egyptian adventurer, calling himself a prophet, had just before this gathered a riotous mob on the Mount of Olives, promising that the walls of Jerusalem should fall at his word, that they might enter and seize the city. They had been dispersed and four hundred of them killed; but the leader had escaped, and the Romans supposed he was now caught. It is not pleasant to remember that Paul was rescued from the violence of his own fellow-Christians and his death at their hands prevented only by the interference of Roman soldiers.¹

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QUESTIONS.

1. Trace upon the map Paul's course after leaving Ephesus, till he came to Jerusalem. 2. What epistle did he write from Macedonia, and what led him to write it ? 3. How many letters did Paul write to Corinth, and how many are preserved ? 4. Give the date of Second Corinthians. 5. What is the tone of this letter ? 6. To what personal hostility does he refer, and how does he meet it ? 7. What has he to say about visions ? 8. What do you understand by Paul's "thorn in the flesh" ? 9. Does a physical defect weaken, or strengthen character ? 10. Mention the various obstacles which Paul had to overcome in carrying out his work. 11. What place did he next visit, and how long was he there ?

12. When and from what place was the Epistle to the Romans written ? 13. How is this determined ? 14. To whom was the epistle addressed ? 15. What object had Paul in writing it, and

¹ Acts xxi. 33-40 ; Joseph. Antiq. xx. 8, 6.

what was its character as distinguished from other epistles? 16. Is there any reason for considering it a general statement of Christian doctrine? 17. What questions does he take up? 18. What does he declare the one essential thing for salvation? 19. What has he to say about the works of the law? 20. What question does he take up in chapter iii. 1, and how did such a question arise? 21. How does Paul answer it? 22. What did he mean by "justification by faith"? 23. What view had he of Christ's death? 24. What ground did he take about the observance of the Sabbath, and other questions of controversy? 25. In what sense do Paul's doctrines in this letter apply to us to-day?

26. Whither did Paul go from Corinth, and for what purpose?
27. What course did he take, and whom did he address on the way?
28. What danger threatened him on coming to Jerusalem?
29. What means of escape did the apostles propose?
30. What do you understand by the vow of the Nazarite?
31. What did Paul do, according to Acts, and how does this conduct strike you?
32. Can it be reconciled with what we know of him through his letters?
33. Repeat the verse 1 Corinthians ix. 22, and tell what you think of it.
34. Does it seem to you a safe precept for men to follow to-day?
35. Give any other instances that occur to you where good men have governed their conduct by policy or expediency.
36. What was the result of the scheme in Paul's case?
37. Who do you understand were the leaders in this attack upon Paul, and by whom was he rescued?

XI.

PAUL IN CÆSAREA.

A.D. 59-62. Acts xxii.-xxvi.

WHEN the Roman tribune found his captive talking Greek, and discovered that he was not the Egyptian fanatic he had supposed, but the victim of a religious tumult, he gave Paul leave to address the people from the steps of the castle, close by the temple. Paul got their ear by speaking to them in their own Hebrew dialect, and described to them his conversion to Christianity; adding that he had preached to the Gentiles, not so much from motives of his own, as in obedience to a direct command from Jesus, received in the temple, just after he became a Christian.¹ The multitude listened to the account of his conversion with great tranquillity, but at the mention of the Gentiles they flew into a great rage, “cast off their clothes and threw dust into the air,” after the fashion of a Jewish rabble, and cried out, “Away with such a fellow from the earth; it is not fit that he should live.”² Once more the Roman officer had to interpose, and bring his prisoner into the castle, where he ordered him to be bound and scourged, to make him confess what his real offence against his countrymen was. Instead of submitting to the torture, however, as he had done more than once before,³ Paul claimed his rights as a Roman citizen;⁴ and the tribune, who had himself purchased the Roman citizenship at great cost, more bewildered than ever at the character of his prisoner, ordered him to be brought before the Jewish Sanhedrin, “because he would know of a certainty wherefore he was accused of the Jews.”⁵

¹ Acts xxii. 17-21. Paul does not refer to this incident in any of his epistles.

² Acts xxii. 22, 23.

³ 2 Cor. xi. 25.

⁴ Acts xxii. 25; also xvi. 37.

⁵ Acts xxii. 27-30.

When the Jewish Council was assembled (they having at this time the control of all religious affairs), an exciting scene followed. The high-priest, Ananias,¹ enraged at some expression or gesture of Paul's, ordered him to be struck in the face; upon which Paul impulsively retorted, "God shall smite thee, thou whited wall;" then immediately excused himself, with apparent irony, by pretending that he had not recognized him as high-priest, else he could not certainly have reviled a "ruler of the people."² When allowed to speak, instead of meeting the charges against him with his usual directness, Paul resorted to a stratagem. Noticing Sadducees as well as Pharisees in his audience, and knowing that any allusion to the resurrection or to spiritual revelations, although not the points then at issue, would set those factions to fighting each other, he cried out at once "I am a Pharisee, the son of a Pharisee; of the hope and resurrection of the dead I am called in question." Nothing more was needed. The Pharisees, catching at his words at once, declared that they "found no evil in this man;" and even hinted to the Sadducees that Paul might have received his revelation from some angel or spirit, in which, as well as in the resurrection, the Sadducees disbelieved.³ The rage of the two parties being turned against each other, Paul's only danger was in being pulled to pieces between his Sadducee assailants and Pharisee defenders; from which peril his Roman protector, more perplexed than ever, once more rescued him.⁴

The next day, a young man claiming to be Paul's nephew⁵ reported to the tribune that the Jews had agreed to summon Paul once more before the Council, and that on his way from the castle, he was to be seized by forty conspirators, who had pledged themselves neither to eat nor to drink until they had

¹ According to Josephus, Antiq. xx. 6, 2, Ananias had been deposed before this time, and sent prisoner to Rome.

² Acts xxiii. 1-5.

³ Acts xxiii. 6-9; compare Carpenter's Life in Palestine, chap. v.

⁴ Acts xxiii. 10.

⁵ Acts xxiii. 16. Either Paul's sister lived in Jerusalem, or this youth was one of Paul's companions in travel.

killed him.¹ The tribune acted promptly. A guard of nearly five hundred men was called out that very night, and Paul was sent under this strong escort to Cæsarea, the residence of the Roman governor, to escape the religious hatreds and passions of Jerusalem, and free the tribune himself from what had no doubt become a burdensome responsibility. A letter was sent with the prisoner, explaining the whole matter to the governor.²

At Cæsarea Paul was placed in some apartment of the palace of Herod the Great, where he remained a prisoner, chained to a guard apparently, for more than two years.³ It was a lenient sort of imprisonment, notwithstanding his chains; as he seems to have had free intercourse with many companions,⁴ some going and coming at will, others, including Mark and Luke, being fellow-prisoners, though perhaps voluntary ones.⁵ As Paul tells us with some feeling, in one of his letters, that of all the Jewish-Christians, only three, Aristarchus, Mark, and a certain Jesus, showed him any sympathy,⁶ we have to infer that his Jerusalem friends, although so near, took little pains to solace his imprisonment. How wearisome the long captivity must have been to one of Paul's active temperament, eager as he was to continue his work in Rome and Spain,⁷ we can imagine. Of course he did not remain idle, as, even if he could not preach, he could write to his distant churches, and arrange plans for the future with his companions. Two or three letters which no doubt date from this time, show how intently his mind kept at work upon the great themes which Christianity suggested, and what new subjects were constantly pressing themselves upon his thought, even after the full statement of his beliefs in the Epistle to the Romans.

To this period of imprisonment belongs probably a little epistle, so short as to be seldom noticed, yet by no means the

¹ Acts xxiii. 12-21.

² Acts xxiii. 22-35.

³ Acts xxiv. 27; xxvi. 29.

⁴ Acts xxiv. 23; Col. iv. 7-14; Philem. 23, 24.

⁵ Col. iv. 10, 14; Philem. 23.

⁶ Col. iv. 10, 11; written probably at this time.

⁷ Rom. xv. 23, 24.

least interesting of the New Testament writings, — the Epistle to Philemon. A Phrygian slave, called Onesimus,¹ having fled from his master took refuge in Cæsarea, and was converted by Paul, who became very strongly attached to him,² and wished to keep him by him as a companion.³ Before long, however, it appeared that Onesimus had robbed his master, or wronged him in some other way;⁴ and Paul on learning this persuaded him to return at once and atone for his offence. The master was Philemon, a citizen of Colosse, whom Paul knew very well, and at whose house the Christians of Colosse assembled.⁵ That the repentant slave might not be unduly punished for his crime, Paul gave him a letter to his master, full of kindly words and gentle entreaty. He reminded Philemon that it was an old man and a prisoner who was pleading with him,⁶ and begged him to receive back his servant “no longer as a servant, but above a servant, a brother beloved.”⁷ “Though in times past he was *unprofitable* to thee,” said Paul, punning on the name Onesimus, “now he is profitable to thee and to me.”⁸ If Philemon had suffered any loss from Onesimus’s dishonesty, Paul offered to make it good. “If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account;”⁹ an offer which, unless it is a piece of plausibility on Paul’s part, shows a generous nature indeed. The result of his intercession we do not know; but the relation in which Paul stood to the runaway slave, the very fact that he could write such a letter at such a time, and could persuade Onesimus to take it and return to his old servitude, gives a delightful glimpse into Paul’s character, and his personal intercourse with his friends. Paul no doubt wrote many private letters to his friends, but this is the only one which has been saved.

Within a few days after Paul’s escape from Jerusalem, the Jewish officials followed him to Cæsarea, bringing with them an orator to present their case before the governor, as in these

¹ Col. iv. 9.

² Philem. 10–12, 16, 17.

⁸ Philem. 13.

⁴ Philem. 18.

⁵ Philem. 1, 2.

⁶ Philem. 9.

⁷ Philem. 16.

⁸ Philem. 11. Onesimus, in Greek, means “profitable.”

⁹ Philem. 18.

days people who have a cause to urge are apt to get a lawyer to speak for them. To these Jews Paul was simply a "ringleader of the sect of the Nazarenes," who had been moving the Jews to sedition all over the world. The governor at this time was Felix, and as his wife Drusilla was a Jewess, we may suppose that they listened to this great heretic with some curiosity of their own, as well as to satisfy the high-priest.¹ Paul accepted in his speech the name heretic, which his enemies had given him² (thus introducing into religious use a term which has since played so important a part), and impressed his hearers so much by his eloquence that the governor seemed quite inclined to release him.³ As he "hoped that money should have been given him of Paul to loose him," however, and as Paul refused this, or had none to offer, Felix did nothing for him, and when Festus, two years later, was made governor in his place, "willing to show the Jews a pleasure, he left Paul bound."⁴

When Festus came to Judæa,⁵ he found the country in a great state of anarchy and the towns and villages round about Cæsarea in constant terror from wandering gangs of robbers.⁶ His first duty was to restore order, and it was only on visiting Jerusalem that his attention was called to the case of Paul, by a request from the high-priest and others that Paul should be sent to Jerusalem to be tried by them. Festus, suspecting perhaps their real design, told them, if they had any charges to make, to come themselves to Cæsarea, and present them. Immediately after his return, Paul was brought before his judgment-seat; but as the accusers could prove nothing against him, and Paul simply denied having done any offence against the law, or against the temple, Festus proposed to turn the matter over to the Jewish Council at Jerusalem, the case to be tried in his presence. Paul knew too well how such a trial must result, and boldly denying the governor's right to transfer him to a

¹ Acts xxiv. 1, 5, 14, 24.

² Acts xxiv. 5, 14; the words "sect" and "heresy" are the same in Greek.

³ Acts xxiv. 25.

⁵ A.D. 61.

⁴ Acts xxiv. 27.

⁶ Josephus, Antiq. xx. 8, 10.

Jewish tribunal, claimed his privilege as a Roman citizen, and appealed directly to the Emperor. This was an unquestioned right of any citizen in any part of the Empire, and Festus, after conferring with his council, answered, "Hast thou appealed unto Cæsar? unto Cæsar shalt thou go."¹ Thus it only remained to send Paul to Rome for a trial there.

Before leaving Cæsarea, however, Paul was called upon to defend himself once more, under less agitating circumstances. Herod Agrippa II., who was then king over certain neighboring districts, came, with his sister Bernice, to pay an official visit to Festus, and on being told about Paul, asked to hear him.² This was purely out of curiosity, as Agrippa had no right to pass judgment on Paul; but as he was a Jew, and governor of the temple at Jerusalem, Festus granted his request at once, hoping thus to get a little clearer idea of Paul's offence, to report to Rome.³ The meeting was held "with great pomp," in the presence, not only of the royal party, but of all the chief captains and principal men of the city. Paul was brought into the hall wearing the chains which bound him while in prison to his guard.⁴ Inspired by the occasion, he spoke with great warmth and eloquence, repeating to Agrippa the story of his conversion, and insisting that what he was preaching in regard to Jesus was only what the prophets had always predicted of the Messiah.⁵ To Festus this sounded like the raving of a fanatic; but Paul turning away from Festus, said directly to the king, "King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest."⁶ No contrast could well be more striking than between the intense earnestness of the great Apostle, whose whole heart was in his words, and the polite indifference of the king, who had been listening with courtesy to this fervid harangue, and turned Paul's unexpected appeal aside with good-natured irony. "You think to make me a Christian on the moment."⁷ A man like Agrippa could hardly be reached by

¹ Acts xxv. 1-12.

² Acts xxv. 11-22.

³ Acts xxv. 26, 27.

⁴ Acts xxvi. 29.

⁵ Acts xxvi. 6, 7, 22, 23.

⁶ Acts xxvi. 24-27.

⁷ Acts xxvi. 28. Corrected translation.

Paul's arguments; still the king and governor agreed together afterwards that the prisoner had "done nothing worthy of death or of bonds," and that if he had not put his case out of their hands by his appeal to Cæsar, he might be set at liberty.¹ It must be remembered, however, that if Paul had *not* appealed to Cæsar when he did, he would before this have been taken back to Jerusalem, and in all probability have suffered violence there, or been killed on the way.

Paul was in Cæsarea, so nearly as we can judge, between A.D. 59 and 62.

REFERENCES.

Hanson's Apostle Paul ; Renan's St. Paul ; Farrar's Paul, vol. ii. ; Bible for Learners, vol. iii. ; Conybeare and Howson, vol. ii. ; Lewin's St. Paul, vol. ii.

QUESTIONS.

1. Describe Paul's speech from the castle steps. 2. Its effect on the people, and what it was that enraged them. 3. What treatment did Paul meet from the Roman officer ? 4. Describe Paul's appearance before the Jewish Council and its results. 5. Which party of the Jews sympathized with Paul, and why ? 6. How does Paul's action on this occasion strike you ? 7. What plot was formed against Paul, and how was it disclosed ? 8. How did he escape, and to what place ? 9. Why to Cæsarea, and before whom ? 10. How long was Paul imprisoned there, and what was the nature of his confinement ? 11. Mention some of his companions. 12. How may we suppose him to have occupied his time ?

13. What called out the Epistle to Philemon ? 14. Describe it. 15. What impression of Paul himself does it give ? 16. Tell all that occurred while Felix was governor. 17. Who followed Felix, and what were his first dealings with Paul ? 18. What appeal did Paul make, and how do you understand it ? 19. What do you think would have been the result, if he had not made this appeal ? 20. Before whom was Paul next brought, and under what circumstances ? 21. Describe his speech, and its effect upon Festus and Agrippa ? 22. What was the date of Paul's captivity in Cæsarea ?

¹ Acts xxvi. 31, 32.

XII.

EPISTLES OF THE CAPTIVITY.

A.D. 59-64.

BESIDE the short letter to Philemon, it is probable that the epistles to the Colossians and Ephesians were also written from Cæsarea. If to these two we add the epistle to the Philippians, written just afterwards from his prison in Rome, we have a little series of letters closely resembling each other in their character, and quite different from any other writings of Paul. Indeed, certain phrases and ideas in these three brief epistles are so unlike Paul's usual language that the question has arisen whether they were really his, or whether they were not written during the theological controversies which sprung up a century later, when just such language was in vogue. As the New Testament writings were collected long after Paul's death, such mistakes as this might easily occur, even without any purpose to deceive, — the real authorship of certain books having been forgotten. Possibly it was so with these letters; but the reasons for suspecting them are by no means conclusive, unless we take it for granted that Paul did not, like all other thinkers, interest himself with new subjects from time to time, or gain any new ideas of Christianity and its founder as the years passed on. What could be more natural than that an active mind like Paul's, accustomed to theological inquiry, should constantly find fresh themes for study in Christianity, and that his letters should show this? We have already seen how many questions he had to answer at first, as to the admission of Gentiles into the church, the observance of the old Jewish customs, and the keeping of holy days; and how different his conclusions were from those of the other apostles. But other questions arose in the course of time, which had to be answered, and which were quite as likely to lead to conflicting views as these.

Among these, none were more important than those in relation to Jesus himself. What manner of man was he? Was he really the Jewish Messiah? And if so, in what way,—simply as an earthly ruler, or in some higher, spiritual sense? In any case, was he quite like other men? or, being sent by God to do so great a work, and calling himself the Son of God, had he not a divine nature which raised him above his fellows?

Nothing could be more interesting to us than to know how Paul met these inquiries, and exactly what his idea of Jesus was; and these three epistles throw much light upon this point. In one respect, however, we meet a serious disappointment at the start. Of the outward life of Jesus, Paul has hardly anything to say in any of his letters. Although writing to those who knew little of Jesus, he tells almost nothing about him, makes few allusions to his personal character or example, and rarely quotes his words.¹ We can explain this only by supposing that Paul had never seen Jesus, and that, although he must have received full accounts of him from the disciples, it was not the outer life that interested him, but the inner. We go to Paul, not to learn how Jesus looked, or spoke, or lived, but only to see what religious work he did, and how he fulfilled the nation's expectations of a Messiah. All that Paul has to say of the man Jesus is, that he was an Israelite of the family of David,² was born, like all other men, of a woman,³ was crucified by the Jews,⁴ was the first one who ever awoke from death,⁵ and that he had risen from the grave, and was still sitting on the right hand of God.⁶ All the personal details which interest us so profoundly, Paul evidently cared very little for.

But if Paul had little to say of Jesus the man, he had much to say of Christ, the Messiah. We must remember that the

¹ 1 Cor. vii. 10; ix. 14; 1 Thess. iv. 15. These are the only instances in which Paul makes any reference, in his own writings, to the words of Jesus. The only actual quotation ascribed to him is found in Acts xx. 35.

² Rom. i. 3.

³ Gal. iv. 4; Rom. ix. 5.

⁴ 1 Cor. i. 23.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 20; Col. i. 18.

⁶ Col. iii. 1.

coming of the Messiah had been looked forward to so long, and had been the subject of so much speculation, that many very mystical ideas about it had been formed. As Paul was versed in Jewish theology, we cannot be surprised to find some of these theological speculations in his writings. His allusions to Christ as the "second Adam," or the "heavenly man," and to the "spiritual body" in which he rose from the dead, are of this kind; although these phrases are used by Paul in a way of which the Jewish rabbis never thought.¹ The idea of the second Adam was suggested, as Paul implies,² by the account of the creation in Exodus. This the Jewish theologians understood as a double creation,—first, of the ideal man, formed "in the image of God,"³ a purely spiritual and immortal being; and second, the actual man Adam, made of the dust of the earth, perishable, and possessing only animal life, or soul, as distinct from spiritual life. The first Adam, in point of time, was this earthly man; the second was the ideal being, who existed at first only in God's mind or in the invisible world, but who was sometime to appear on earth as the Christ. When he appeared, all were to become spiritual and immortal like himself, and form a heavenly or spiritual kingdom, of which he was the head.⁴

With these speculations Paul must have been familiar before his conversion to Christianity, and it was evidently the recollection of them that inspired the sublime passages on immortality in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. This ideal being, foretold for ages and present to God's mind from the beginning, had appeared at last in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. "The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam a life-giving spirit." "The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is from heaven."⁵ And as with Christ, so with all who believed in him and entered with him into the spiritual life. "As we have borne the image of the earthly, we shall also

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 44, 45.

² 1 Cor. xv. 45. "It is written" refers to Gen. ii. 7. ³ Gen. i. 27.

⁴ Compare Philo, De mun. opific., i. 90; Mang. i. 32; Gfrörer's Urchristenthum, i. 267; Meyer on 1 Cor. xv. 45.

⁵ 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47.

bear the image of the heavenly." "So when this corruption shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory."¹

So long as Paul was able to preach and work, these ideas of Christ only stirred him to great missionary zeal; but as the hours of confinement came, they evidently stirred him also to much meditation. He was as vigorous a thinker as worker, and was sure not to avoid any of the questions which his new faith suggested. What was the nature of this mysterious "heavenly man," and in what relation did he stand to other men and to God? Men's ideas of the heavenly regions were altogether different in those days from ours to-day. Knowing nothing of the movements of the earth or the relations of the heavenly bodies, they imagined heaven, as we have seen, to be a fixed region above their heads and beyond their sight, the spaces being filled with invisible creatures. Just above the earth dwelt the spirits of the air, or evil spirits, with their demon-prince;² in the higher regions were many orders of good angels and bad, divided into ranks, under the mystic names of "thrones, dominions, principalities, powers,"³ and ruled over by archangels. Where, now, among these invisible beings, it might well be asked, was Christ to be placed?

Whether this question was ever put directly to Paul or not, he could not have been unfamiliar with these ideas; and the three epistles of which I have spoken, written in captivity, when his mind had leisure to dwell on such themes, show what conclusions he reached. He claimed for Christ the highest possible place among heavenly powers. He thought of him as far above the human race, far above all ranks of angels, and next in dignity to God himself.

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 49, 54.

² Eph. ii. 2; Matt. xii. 24. Compare Meyer on Eph. ii. 2; Carpenter's Life in Palestine, p. 59.

³ Col. i. 16; Eph. i. 21; vi. 12; 1 Cor. xv. 24; Rom. viii. 38.

This appears first in the Epistle to the Colossians, written about A.D. 60. Colosse was a Phrygian town which Paul had never visited,¹ but where a church had been founded, apparently, during his ministry in Ephesus. The Colossians recognized the various orders of angels of which I have spoken,² and had the habit, it would seem, of worshipping them, to the neglect, as Paul felt, of proper reverence for Christ.³ This practice or some similar cause, led him to write to them, and he shows them how much worthier of honor Christ is than any of the other angels. Christ, he tells them (referring to Gen. i. 27), is the "image of the invisible God, and first-born of created things." In Christ, he says, "all things were created [Christ being the ideal, that is, in accordance with which the whole creation was made], whether in heaven or in earth, . . . thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers; all things were created through him [as divine agent] and to him [as end]."⁴ In Christ, indeed, "dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily;"⁵ that is, he shared in the spiritual or divine essence of Deity; as by following Christ others might also.⁶

The Epistle to the Ephesians, written about the same time,⁷ much of which is almost a repetition of Colossians, and in which the writer seems to be addressing those whom he has never seen⁸ instead of a people among whom he had lived for three years, is the most doubtful of these letters; but accepting it as Paul's, we find in it quite as mystic language concerning Christ as that just quoted. No other epistle has so much to say of the "mystery" of the new truth.⁹ None portrays so vividly the realm of evil spirits against which men have to contend. "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the world-rulers of the present darkness [that is, satanic powers], against the spirits of evil in heavenly places."¹⁰ None assigns to Christ a more exalted

¹ Col. ii. 1.

² Col. i. 16.

³ Col. ii. 18, 19.

⁴ Col. i. 15, 16.

⁵ Col. i. 19; ii. 9.

⁶ Eph. iii. 19.

⁷ A.D. 60 or 61.

⁸ Eph. i. 15.

⁹ Eph. i. 9; iii. 3, 4, 9; v. 32; vi. 19.

¹⁰ Eph. vi. 12; ii. 2.

place. "Far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name which is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come."¹

The Epistle to the Philippians was undoubtedly written from Rome,² and was brought to the Philippians by one Epaphroditus, whom they had sent to Paul with tender messages and gifts to comfort him in his captivity. None seemed more thoughtful of his needs than the Philippians, and none won from him more grateful or touching acknowledgments.³ Though written a little later than Colossians or Ephesians,⁴ the letter falls into the same tone in regard to Christ, and can best be taken up in connection with them. Paul points the Philippians to Christ as the type of lowliness and humility, describing him in a passage more obscure than any yet quoted, and one which can be understood only in connection with the peculiar beliefs of the times. To our thought to-day, it would be quite impossible to conceive of an angelic being jealous of the power of God, and tempted to snatch from God his divine authority; but in that age such ideas were not so unfamiliar, and Paul seems to have had something of the sort in mind when he wrote to the Philippians, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not presume to grasp equality with God, but made himself of no reputation, and was made in the likeness of men. . . . Wherefore [seeing his humility] God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth."⁵

These passages are all somewhat mystical, and both the language and the ideas are so unfamiliar to us in these days that we cannot be sure that we understand exactly Paul's meaning; yet it is quite clear that he ascribed to Christ a much higher rank than that which belongs to any human being, and a nature very different from ours. We must always remember, however,

¹ Eph. i. 21.

² Phil. ii. 25; iv. 10-18.

³ Phil. ii. 5-11.

⁴ Phil. i. 13; iv. 22.

⁵ About A.D. 63.

that Paul was writing, not for these times but for his own, and was answering very different questions from any which would be asked to-day. Every one must express his religious thoughts in accordance with the ideas and beliefs of his age. Paul lived in the first century, not in the nineteenth, and it is not strange if his language reflects the thought of the first century. To read him correctly, we must not try to make him think and talk as we do, but must place ourselves, as well as we can, back in the age in which he lived.

We must remember, too, that whatever Paul's idea of Christ may have been, he never thought of him as in any sense equal with God, but only as God's agent or instrument. In these days, to speak of Christ as a divine being is almost the same as calling him God; but in those days, when the heavens were thought to be full of divine beings, it was very different. Paul never thought of calling Christ God, but said distinctly, "When all things shall be subdued unto him [Christ], then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."¹ We may not fully understand Paul's language, but one thing is unquestionable, that while he had a very exalted idea of his great Master, and thought no description too glowing or sublime to apply to him, Christ and God were two totally distinct beings to his thought.

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QUESTIONS.

1. Which epistles were written during Paul's captivity?
2. What reason is there for doubting about these epistles, and is it a sufficient reason?
3. How do these differ, as to their subjects, from Paul's other

¹ 1 Cor. xv. 28.

epistles? 4. How much has Paul to say about the outward life of Jesus, and how do you understand this? 5. What opportunities had he of learning about Jesus? 6. How do you understand the expression, first and second Adam? 7. Repeat the Old Testament passages which suggested these terms. 8. How did Paul apply this to Christ? 9. How do you understand the phrase, "the first fruits of them that slept"? (1 Cor. xv. 20.) 10. Does it seem to you natural, or not, that Paul should have retained many of his Jewish theological ideas after becoming Christian?

11. What ideas of heaven and heavenly spirits prevailed in Paul's time? 12. How do they correspond with our beliefs now? 13. Show Colosse on the map, and tell when and where the Epistle to the Colossians was written. 14. What seems to have led Paul to write it? 15. What names for the different orders of angels do you find in this letter? 16. What language does Paul use in regard to Christ, and how do you understand it? 17. When and where was the Epistle to the Ephesians written? 18. What relation does it bear to Colossians, and what language is used concerning Christ? 19. When and from what place was the Epistle to the Philippians written, and under what circumstances? 20. What peculiar idea about Christ does it contain? 21. What are we to infer from all these passages as to Paul's conception of Christ? 22. What difficulty is there in interpreting these words exactly? 23. What relation, according to Paul, did Christ hold to God? 24. Is it possible to understand any writer without trying to place ourselves in his times? 25. How does this apply to Paul? 26. How does it apply to the use we are to make of his doctrines?

XIII.

PAUL IN ROME.

A.D. 62-64. Acts xxvii., xxviii.

WHEN it was determined to send Paul to Rome, he was put into the hands of a centurion of the imperial cohort, called Julius, and in the autumn of A.D. 61 they set sail in a vessel bound for Adramyttium in Mysia. Fortunately for us, the writer of the journal already quoted from, who does not seem to have been with Paul since leaving Jerusalem,¹ rejoined him at this time, and gives a very vivid and minute account of the whole voyage, in striking contrast with the vague and fragmentary character of the general narrative in Acts. Beside this writer, Aristarchus, a Macedonian, was also with Paul, as well as other prisoners.² Some one has pointed out the fact that in this same year, or the next, Josephus, the most noted Jewish historian of that age, sailed for Rome at this season, with six hundred people on board, and was shipwrecked in the Adriatic Sea.³ Paul's voyage proved equally disastrous, and was an eventful one throughout.

After touching at Sidon, and being driven by head winds to the north of Cyprus, they landed at Myra, in the southwestern corner of Asia Minor. Here they found an Alexandrian vessel starting for Italy, into which the centurion and his prisoners were shifted, making two hundred and seventy-six passengers in all.⁴ This would seem a large number for the small vessels of that period, were it not for the six hundred spoken of by Josephus; in any case, the passengers probably found themselves in very close quarters. Head winds still delayed them, and the stormiest season of the year was approaching. For a time they could get no farther than Crete, where Paul advised them

¹ Acts xxi. 18.

² Life of Flavius Josephus, § iii.

³ Acts xxvii. 1, 2.

⁴ Acts xxvii. 37.

to stay through the winter, predicting that if they went on, the voyage would be "with hurt and much damage, not only of the lading and the ship, but also of our lives."¹ As the haven was not a commodious one, however, and the centurion naturally "believed the master and owners of the ship more than Paul," they started again with a fair wind, meaning to winter in Phenice, the next port. Before reaching it, they were struck by a hurricane which drove them south, almost to the coast of Africa, and threatened to wreck them upon the great sand-bank called the Syrtis, off Libya.² So terrific was the wind that they almost lost their little skiff (literally, "dug-out"), and resorted to the singular device of binding the ship together by cables passed under her. The next day they threw part of the cargo overboard, and the day after, the tackling of the ship; but the storm continued; "neither sun nor stars in many days appeared;" the sailors were hardly allowed to eat; until, after fourteen days, finding a coast near, they ran the vessel aground on an island, and got ashore as they could, on boards and broken pieces of the ship.³ The soldiers proposed to kill Paul and his comrades, lest they should escape, but the centurion told the prisoners to save themselves with the rest. The island proved to be Malta.

According to our journalist, who certainly had opportunities of judging, Paul was the only one on board who kept his courage and presence of mind, throughout the storm. At the height of the peril, he cheered them all by telling them of a vision, in which an angel had appeared to assure him that he would live to appear before Cæsar, and that all would be saved. When they first cast anchor, and the sailors had let down the small boat to desert the ship, Paul urged cutting the ropes, and letting the boat drift away. Finally, when they were all exhausted by long fasting Paul persuaded them to take some food, by composedly eating in their presence, giving thanks to God as he broke the bread.⁴ Thus, whether on sea or on shore, Paul,

¹ Acts xxvii. 10.

² Acts xxvii. 17; "lest they should be driven upon the Syrtis."

³ Acts xxvii. 18-44.

⁴ Acts xxvii. 21-26; 30-36.

judging from this account, possessed the art of making others look up to him. The superstitious islanders of Malta seem to have been impressed in the same way; for seeing Paul shake off a viper from his hand without being poisoned by it, having first suspected him of being a murderer, they immediately concluded that he was a god.¹ The voyagers stayed three months in Malta, kindly treated by the chief inhabitant, Publius, then finding another ship of Alexandria, called the "Castor and Pollux," they embarked again for Italy. After landing at Syracuse, they left the vessel finally at Puteoli, and from that port, started on foot for Rome. When the brethren at Rome heard of their arrival, they came to meet them as far as Appii Forum, nearly forty miles out; "whom when Paul saw he thanked God and took courage." So, cheered by their friendly welcome, he entered the eternal city, which he had so long desired to see.²

Here for some strange reason, all accounts of Paul's career suddenly fail. What became of the companion who gives us such a detailed description of the voyage, we cannot tell; nor why the author of Acts could not get elsewhere some information, however slight, of this most interesting period. We are left to conjecture whether he died in Rome, or escaped from his imprisonment to carry out his long-cherished plans of preaching in Spain and the West. Who the "brethren" were who received him, whether a few converts of his own, waiting for him to organize them into a church, as the scanty notes in Acts would imply, or a community already established, as the Epistle to the Romans, written long before this, would indicate, we cannot tell.

All that we are told in Acts is that Paul was allowed to dwell by himself, with a soldier to guard him; that after three days he called the chief of the Jews together, and found that, although they knew of the sect of the Nazarenes, they had heard

¹ Acts xxviii. 8-6. Popular belief makes all snakes poisonous. Our King James translators seem to have shared this superstition with the islanders, as they pronounce Paul's viper "venomous," although there is no such word in the original.

² Acts xxviii. 7-15.

nothing from Judæa about Paul; that some of them came to his lodgings to listen to him, but that he won few converts from the great Jewish population of the city, and finally turned away from them, as he had repeatedly done before, to preach his gospel to the Gentiles. So “Paul dwelt two whole years in his own hired house, and received all that came in unto him, preaching the kingdom of God . . . with all confidence, no man forbidding him.”¹

Turning to other sources, to get what slight hints we can as to this Roman imprisonment, we find that Timothy was with him, and also Epaphroditus, the messenger who had been sent to him from Philippi, to bring loving contributions to his needs.² The church at Philippi, as we have already seen, was almost the only one to remember the Apostle in this way, having done so more than once before;³ and Paul’s allusions to their kindness are among the tenderest and most interesting passages which he wrote. He would not seem to seek their aid, for he had learned “in whatsoever state he was, therewith to be content;” but he would have them understand how much their generosity had cheered and helped him, and that what Epaphroditus had brought from them had been to him “an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.”⁴ From still another source, if it be genuine,⁵ we learn that at one time Luke only was with him, and that he was anxious about a certain “clove,” together with books and especially parchments, which he had left behind at Troas.⁶ Sad allusions are made, too, to enemies who had injured him, to friends who had forsaken him in the hour of need, and to great perils in Rome, perhaps public trials and tortures, from which he had escaped as “out of the mouth of the lion.”⁷ We infer that great success attended his preaching in Rome, and also that certain persons who had been led by him to

¹ Acts xxviii. 16-31.

² Phil. ii. 19, 25; iv. 18.

³ Phil. iv. 15, 16.

⁴ Phil. iv. 11-18.

⁵ See Lesson xv.

⁶ 2 Tim. iv. 11, 13.

⁷ 2 Tim. iv. 14-17.

"preach Christ," turned against him finally as a false teacher and "added affliction to his bonds."¹ Converts seem to have been made in the imperial family; possibly among those in high rank, though perhaps only among the servants of the household.² Under such circumstances, Paul betrays the conflicting emotions which one might well expect,—sometimes looking forward with great confidence to his release, and the opportunity of seeing his beloved Philippians once more;³ again, while wishing this for their sake, and for the work still to be done for Christ, yet longing for his own sake to be free from the troubles which gather about him, and to be at peace. "For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. . . . I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better: nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you."⁴

Tradition has made itself very busy in filling out the vacant spaces left by the book of Acts. In Rome the church of Santa Maria in Via Lata is pointed out as occupying the spot where St. Paul lodged with the centurion; and under it a spring of water is shown which welled up miraculously for the baptizing of converts. As early as the end of the first century, it was reported that the purposes which Paul was known to have formed,⁵ were actually carried out; that he "preached both in the East and in the West," and that "having travelled even to the utmost bounds of the West, he at last suffered martyrdom by the command of the governors."⁶ One legend fixes the exact date of his death, and says that Paul suffered martyrdom at the hands of the executioner, June 29, 67.

But all this is pure conjecture. Of Paul's fate, after his two years in Rome, we know absolutely nothing. But we do know that on the 19th of July, A.D. 64, just two years after Paul's arrival in Rome by our reckoning, a fire broke out among the booths of the circus lying between the Palatine and Cælian

¹ Phil. i. 12-17; iii. 18, 19.

² Phil. i. 13; iv. 22.

³ Phil. i. 25; ii. 23, 24.

⁴ Phil. i. 21-26.

⁵ Rom. xv. 24-28.

⁶ 1 Clement to Corinthians, iii. 13, 14; also 2 Tim. iv. 16; 1 Pet. v. 13.

hills. Fierce winds drove the flames through the city, and attendants of the Emperor Nero were seen busily preventing all attempts to extinguish them. The fire raged first for six days, then for three days more; till out of the fourteen districts of Rome only four remained unharmed. Of the other ten, three were a heap of smoking ruins. The chief temples and monuments were destroyed, and numberless inhabitants, caught by the flames while trying to save their property, perished with their homes. Wild rumors arose as to the part which the Emperor himself had taken in this conflagration, and the joy he had shown in watching it. To turn the popular wrath from himself, Nero declared that the Christians were guilty of the crime. At once the leaders of the hated sect (which had evidently grown greatly in numbers during Paul's stay) were seized and tortured. Some were crucified. Others, more unfortunate still, were clothed in skins and hunted in the circus by bloodhounds. Others still were covered with pitch, and set fire to in the evening, to serve as torches to light up the public games. Such is the account given by Tacitus, and the first mention of the Christians in secular history takes this melancholy form.¹

That Paul, if still in Rome, could have escaped this sweeping persecution, is hardly conceivable. The fact that nothing is known of his death makes it more than probable that he was one of Nero's many victims, and that his noble career found, either in the flames or in the circus, this painful close.²

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¹ Tacitus Ann. xiv. 51-xv. 44.

² The question of Paul's age is left as doubtful as all the other points of chronology. In Acts vii. 58, as we have seen, he is a "young man;" in Philemon 9, he is "Paul the aged;" yet less than thirty years intervene. At most he was thirty-five in the first instance; in which case he would have been under sixty-five at his death in A.D. 64.

Rome; Merivale's St. Paul at Rome (Society for promoting Christian Knowledge); C. M. Butler's St. Paul in Rome.

QUESTIONS.

1. Trace out on the map Paul's voyage to Rome, as given in Acts.
2. How long was the voyage, and what companions were with him?
3. Describe the incidents of the voyage as given in Acts.
4. How did Paul appear during the voyage?
5. How long were they in Malta, and what happened there?
6. Trace the course from the final landing-place to Rome, and point out the place where Paul met the brethren from Rome.
7. What account does Acts give of Paul's life in Rome?
8. How explain so brief an account of this important period?
9. What points does it leave undetermined?
10. In what year did Paul arrive in Rome, and how long was he there?

11. From what other source do we learn about Paul's stay in Rome?
12. What was the conduct of the Philippians towards Paul?
13. How does Paul acknowledge this kindness?
14. What information does the Epistle to Philippians give as to Paul in Rome?
15. What are the traditions about Paul's later experience, and what is the foundation for them?
16. When did the great fire in Rome occur, and under whom?
17. Describe the event.
18. How were the Christians affected by it?
19. What reason is there for supposing that Paul was among these Christians?
20. If Paul died at this time, what was his age?

XIV.

CHARACTER AND WORK OF PAUL.

THE hostility to Paul which pursued and thwarted him through life continued long after his death. For more than a century his teachings were looked upon with suspicion, and the Christian church grudged him a place among its apostles.

Now that these old controversies are over, and his position is undisputed, it is easy to see how important a work he accomplished, and how different the history of early Christianity would have been without his presence. When Paul became a follower of Jesus, Christianity, as we have seen, had not separated itself from Judaism. It had not even a name of its own. It had not determined whether any but Jews should be admitted to its ranks. These questions were settled only after a long and bitter struggle, and in this struggle the chief actor was Paul. What were the personal qualities which fitted him for so great a work?

That he owed much to his peculiar training, we cannot doubt. The other disciples were men of very limited Jewish culture. Paul had received the best theological instruction that Jerusalem afforded. Much of this instruction, as Paul's writings occasionally show, was of a very barren and finical kind, but with this was often a thoroughly earnest and profound inquiry into religious truth. The better class of Jewish theologians interpreted Judaism in the broadest spirit, and there is little doubt that some of the very questions which Paul had to meet, as a Christian, had already engaged his thought as a Jew. He was ready, therefore, as new problems arose, to see their bearing at once. When he found the older disciples resisting the admission of uncircumcised Greeks into their communion, it seemed to him like a return to the "weak and beggarly elements," from whose bondage he had just escaped.

But much more than the training which Paul received, was Paul himself. He could not have appreciated what was best

in the religious thought of the day, or have felt so profoundly the inadequacy of his own Jewish faith, but for a very deep religious nature and keen moral instincts. We have seen with what passionate earnestness he seized the new faith. He accepted it because it satisfied his moral needs. His own religion brought him no peace. The more faithful he tried to be, the greater was the inward agitation. The passage in which he describes this spiritual struggle, and the suffering through which he had passed before coming to his belief in Christ, is one of the most moving confessions of personal experience ever made to the world.¹ In the intensity and fervor of his moral nature we find, if in any one quality, the key to his character.

To this ardent temperament he added, evidently, deep and strong intellectual convictions. He was always very sure he was right. His inward persuasions, and especially his visions, had the force of divine inspirations. He did not wish to be taught by the older disciples; he did not need their guidance; he resented their attempts to show him what Christianity meant. His inward vision of Jesus was as authoritative to him as their actual knowledge of him in the flesh. In his personal conviction of what was right, he was willing to stand, when necessary, against the entire body of apostles.

This required great courage, of course. His letters give us some idea of the bitterness and malevolence with which his enemies pursued him from church to church, and his words hint often at sufferings and trials greater even than any which are recorded. It is only as we read between the lines that we get a full conception of the fearlessness and fortitude which his ministry demanded. Without these traits, he must have fallen by the way long before his work was finished.

With his courage and impetuosity, we are not surprised to find other less engaging qualities. He certainly had a great capacity of indignation. He was led at times to return his opponents' abuse with invectives quite as bitter as theirs. With his high standard of duty, and stern sense of right, he

¹ Rom. vii.

could not forgive those who faltered by the way, or played false to their principles. It would be easy to recall more than one instance where Paul's companions must have thought his judgments severe and unyielding. Yet we have to remember that without these uncompromising traits, he could hardly have had the strength of purpose and will by which his great victories were won.

Many will be less disturbed by Paul's severity than by his occasional surrender of his convictions for reasons of policy.¹ In forming our estimate of his character, we cannot forget that he more than once yielded, just where we expected him to stand firm. Some think these incidents so inconsistent with Paul's character that they deny the facts; but this seems to me quite too arbitrary a course. There is no end to the varieties of human character, and it is better worth our while to study Paul's individuality than to lay down rules for it. When he says, "I please all men in all things," or "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some,"² he must mean something by the words. He must mean that he was ready to yield when occasion required; that his opinions were not of that inflexible kind which refuse to see anything right outside of themselves. No doubt the occasion had to be an important one; but we have no right, at this distance of time, to declare that the special occasions mentioned in Acts were not important.

It cannot be denied that these incidents are very perplexing, and are of the utmost interest in determining Paul's character. They may mean simply that Paul was human, and could not always act from the noblest motives. Or they may mean, as seems to me more probable, that the pressure upon one in Paul's position was far more powerful than we can now realize. The bitter prejudices of the Jewish Christians, the wrath of the bigots, the real grief of the devout, when ancient customs were violated, the hold those customs had in hours of reaction, even

¹ See especially, Acts xvi. 8 ; xxi. 20-26.

² 1 Cor. x. 33; ix. 22.

on a mind like Paul's, — perhaps these are the lessons we are to be taught when we see the great Apostle to the Gentiles consenting to circumcise one of his companions, or subjecting himself, in the most public way, to grotesque Nazarite vows. Each one must draw his own inference from these facts. I have no desire to defend them, or to make Paul out anything but human; they only seem to me to show that with all his impetuosity and courage, Paul chose to govern his conduct by circumstances.

We must not omit Paul's personal traits. I have already spoken of the traditions concerning his face and figure. All the old accounts agree that he was far from being a man of commanding presence. He speaks of himself as one who "in presence am base among you."¹ One of the later descriptions represents him as "little and dwarfish in person, slightly crooked, and somewhat stooping."² According to another statement, he was less than five feet high. Not only was his "bodily presence weak," but "his speech," too, according to his opponents, was "contemptible,"³ — either feeble, that is, or hesitating.

But all these drawbacks only bring into stronger light the power of Paul's personality. In spite of peculiarities of speech or person, his ardent convictions gave his words the force of eloquence, — the eloquence of strong thought and deep feeling, no doubt, rather than of oratorical gifts. Notwithstanding his diminutive stature, he evidently impressed all whom he approached with the sense of his superiority. Peter and James felt, as soon as he appeared among them, that he was one whom they need not expect to convert, but to whom a special place of his own must be assigned. Barnabas started upon his missionary travels having Paul as a companion and follower; but the subordinate at once became the leader, and gave to their common work the stamp of his individuality. Even on shipboard, if the accounts are true, among Roman sailors

¹ 2 Cor. x. 1.

² Nicephorus, Eccles. Hist. ii. 37. 15th century.

³ 2 Cor. x. 10.

and soldiery, the Jewish prisoner commanded the confidence of all, and was the only one in the ship whose counsel was listened to.

In such severe and positive natures we cannot look for many of the gentler or more genial graces. Paul gave little token of joyousness or poetic feeling, or quick perception of beauty. Living as he did in the constant expectation of the overthrow of all earthly kingdoms, life necessarily bore a serious aspect, and in any case we may doubt if he would have seen its brighter and happier side. The fact has been pointed out that, although travelling so frequently through picturesque mountain regions, and over radiant seas, Paul had nothing to say of the natural beauties about him, and seemed quite unaware of them.¹ This was less remarkable in those days than it would be in these; yet it is worth remembering, especially when we recall the frequent allusions to natural scenes and incidents in the Gospels. At the same time, we cannot deny that Paul showed great interest in new places and new people. His eager missionary zeal sprang chiefly, no doubt, from the determination to give the Christian faith a wider hearing; but joined with this, unquestionably, was a decided love for travel and spirit of adventure.

In his writings, as in his speech, though we find little literary finish, yet we feel the glow of strong feeling and passionate religious emotion. The man of action, we find, can also be a man of thought. Even his contemporaries found his language sometimes obscure,² and it is not strange if many of his sentences seem to us broken and involved, and his reasoning a little far-fetched; but as a rule, his words were singularly fitted to the thought, and many single passages in his letters are of rare dignity and beauty. It can be said of his writings, as of all his words and acts, that they bore unmistakable marks of his personality.

We cannot assume, of course, that if Paul had not appeared, Christianity would have remained a Jewish sect, or disappeared entirely; for Christianity had an independent life in itself which

¹ Farrar's Paul, i. 360.

² 2 Pet. iii. 16.

Paul did not confer upon it, and which would have been sure in the end to assert itself. If not Paul, some other than Paul must have discovered in the course of time that the new faith was vitally distinct from the old, and was only awaiting its opportunity to begin a career of its own. But in the actual course of events, as we have seen, this great work fell to the lot of Paul. It is not necessary to disparage the other apostles in order to elevate him; but however much we may owe to them, it is to Paul that we owe distinctly the first recognition of Christianity as an independent faith, and its first establishment as one among the religions of the world. To none of the other disciples is our debt so large.

REFERENCES.

Lewin's St. Paul, ii. 410; Hanson's Apostle Paul; Renan's St. Paul, chap. xxii.; Frothingham's Cradle of the Christ; Hutton's Essays, Theological and Literary, vol. i.; Allen's Fragments of Christian History; Unitarian Review, Jan., 1878; Hausrath's Paulus.

QUESTIONS.

1. State what seem to you the important incidents of Paul's life.
2. What was the condition of the Christian church when Paul joined it? 3. How did his training fit him for the work he was to do?
4. How did his education differ from that of the other disciples?
5. What impression of his moral and religious nature have these studies given you?
6. What qualities did he show in his conduct towards the other disciples?
7. What proofs of courage did he give?
8. What qualities did he show in his treatment of opponents, and his language towards them?
9. How far is denunciatory language ever justifiable?
10. Can great strength and tenderness go together, and how was it with Paul?

11. Mention instances where Paul yielded to others' prejudices or opinions.
12. How do you reconcile this with Paul's truthfulness and independence?
13. How far is it right for us to govern our

conduct by motives of policy ? 14. What seems to you the finest trait in Paul's character ? 15. Should you describe him as a man of thought, or a man of action ? 16. What is known of his personal appearance ? 17. What effect is personal appearance apt to have on character, and how was it in Paul's case ? 18. What is known of his power as an orator ? 19. What seem to you the limitations of his character ? 20. What characteristics do his writings seem to you to show ? 21. What do you consider Paul's most important service to Christianity ?

XV.

SOURCES OF OUR KNOWLEDGE.

OUR knowledge of St. Paul is drawn, as we have seen, partly from the historical narrative called the Acts of the Apostles, partly from Paul's own letters. Instead of describing these writings in advance, I have preferred to wait until we had studied them a little, that we might be better able to judge of their character and value for ourselves. Let us see, now, what claims they have upon our confidence.

The Acts of the Apostles is commonly supposed to have been written by Luke, a companion of Paul, who was also the author of the third Gospel. This theory we can trace back to the latter part of the second century.¹ That the book of Acts and the third Gospel were both by the same author is quite evident from the books themselves;² but it does not follow that this author was Luke, as that name is not mentioned, and, as we have seen, was not suggested (so far as we know) till a century later. Indeed, it is difficult to see how the Acts could possibly have been written by any companion of Paul, or any one who had received from him an account of his travels. We have seen how many events of the highest interest the book omits, while others are several times repeated under slightly different forms,³ and others still, of far less importance, are given in the minutest detail.⁴ From the book of Acts alone, we should get a very incomplete idea of Paul's missionary work. Only one visit to Corinth is mentioned,⁵ while Paul speaks of two or three;⁶ hardly anything is told us of the two years at Rome, or the two years at Cæsarea;

¹ Irenæus, Hær. iii. 14, 15. About A.D. 175.

² Luke i. 1-4; Acts i. 1, 2. ³ Acts ix. 3-9; xxii. 6-11; xxvi. 12-18.

⁴ Acts xxvii.

⁵ Acts xviii. 1-18.

⁶ 2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1. This "third time" which Paul looks forward to was probably the visit of Acts xx. 2, 3, where the writer of Acts speaks simply of "Greece."

no mention is made of the incidents which Paul alludes to with so much feeling in 1 Cor. xv. 32, 2 Cor. i. 8, xi. 24, 25; no clue is given us to the "churches of Galatia," to whom Paul wrote one of his most confidential letters;¹ while in several cases, as we have seen, the narrative in Acts contradicts Paul's own statements in his letters.² We cannot suppose, then, that the book, as a whole, was written by any one so familiar with Paul as Luke must have been, or any one who was himself acquainted with the events which he describes.

But if Luke could not have written the whole book, he may have written a part. Many of the Scripture books grew gradually into their final form out of very small original germs, and such may well have been the case here. In other words, the book of Acts is, in all probability, a compilation. This appears, as we have seen, upon its face. Certain passages, scattered along over the pages, are in the first person, while all the rest is in the third person. In modern books, these passages would unquestionably be given as quotations and their origin perhaps stated; but even without quotation-marks, the change in the pronoun, together with the much greater minuteness which characterizes them in part, shows plainly enough that they are by a different hand from the rest. They seem to be a sort of journal, or itinerary, kept by some one who joined Paul when he first went from Troas to Philippi, stayed behind when Paul went to Athens and Corinth, rejoined him on his final visit to Jerusalem, and was with him again on his voyage to Rome.³ Who this companion was, we cannot tell with any certainty. Some have supposed it was Titus,⁴ others Timothy;⁵ but it is quite as likely to have been a certain Luke, who, although not mentioned in Acts, is alluded to elsewhere as Paul's companion,⁶

¹ Compare Lesson ix.

² Compare Acts ix. 19, 23, 26–30 with Gal. i. 15–18; Acts xv. with Gal. ii.; Acts xvii. 14–16, xviii. 5, with 1 Thess. iii. 1, 2.

³ These passages, marked by the pronoun "we," are Acts xvi. 10–17; xx. 5–xxi. 18; xxvii. 1–xxviii. 16.

⁴ 2 Cor. ii. 13; vii. 6–14; Gal. ii. 1; 2 Tim. iv. 10.

⁵ Acts xvi. 1–3; xviii. 5; 2 Cor. i. 1, 19; Rom. xvi. 21.

⁶ Col. iv. 14; 2 Tim. iv. 11; Philem. 24.

whom Paul calls a physician,¹ and who, according to a much later church tradition,² was a painter. These original memoranda we may suppose to have formed the basis of the history, the compiler adding whatever information he could obtain from other sources,³ and working the whole into a complete narrative. Some have charged the compiler with intentionally arranging or modifying his material, so as to conceal the party strife which appears so plainly in Paul's epistles, and to show how little difference there really was between Peter and Paul. Every narrator is likely to color the events which he describes, however slightly, by his own prepossessions, and it might easily happen that the editor of the Acts would be anxious to bring out whatever agreement between the apostles he could discover, and keep their dissensions as much as possible in the background; but that there was any serious sacrifice of historical truth, we have no reason to assume. The book of Acts is as trustworthy as any anonymous work of that period can be. Its general narrative we have no reason to doubt; though wherever it plainly conflicts with statements of Paul, we cannot hesitate to prefer Paul to his unknown biographer. When or by whom the work was put into its present form, we cannot tell. The first definite allusion to it, as we have seen, was late in the second century, showing that by that time it was well known, and was attributed to Luke. If the above theory is correct, the original passages of the book, written probably by Luke, belong to the time of Paul himself or just after, while the whole was compiled towards the end of the first century, when the interest in collecting the New Testament records first began. It is easy to see how the whole work might come to be ascribed to Luke if certain portions were his; nor does it detract from its historical worth to suppose that something of this kind happened.

¹ Col. iv. 14.

² Niceph. Eccl. Hist. ii. 43.

³ The piecing together of these fragments is in one case, at least, quite obvious; Acts xiii. 1 begins as though Saul had never been mentioned before.

The origin and dates of Paul's epistles are, of course, much easier to determine, though in no case to be fixed precisely. Not all the letters called by his name are to be considered his, as he tells us of forgeries during his lifetime,¹ while after his death epistles of doubtful authorship might naturally have been ascribed to him, either to secure attention to them or simply because he was known to have written so many. This seems to have been the case with the Epistle to the Hebrews, which is called Paul's in our Bibles, yet which is almost universally rejected now, as being unlike Paul's in its style. The case is not quite so clear with the epistles to Timothy and Titus, called commonly the Pastoral Epistles. Like the Epistle to the Hebrews, they are called Paul's in the New Testament; but certain historical allusions in them are so hard to reconcile with the facts of Paul's life given elsewhere, that we must consider them doubtful as a whole, though single passages may have come from Paul.²

Many doubts have been expressed in late years about the three smaller epistles to Colossians, Ephesians, and Philippians; as the peculiar language about Christ found in these letters³ is not only unlike Paul's language elsewhere, but seems to involve theological ideas which belong to the second century. But it is not so easy, at twenty centuries' distance, to tell just when a new idea was first held; nor can we assume that Paul, after becoming a Christian, held always the same religious views or used always the same language. I have already given reasons for thinking that Paul probably wrote all these epistles, that to the Ephesians being the most doubtful.⁴

As to all these epistles, we must remember that there is no positive evidence in any case, as to date or place of writing. The postscripts at the end of the several letters were no part of the letters themselves, but were added much later; and we are forced to judge of time and place as well as we can from chance allusions in the letters themselves.

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 2.

² Compare Hausrath's *Paulus*, p. 485.

³ See Lesson xii.

⁴ See Lesson xii.

The two earliest are supposed to be First and Second Thessalonians. According to 1 Thess. iii. 6, Timothy had just come to Paul from Thessalonica when the first letter was written, and, according to 2 Thess. i. 1, was still with him when the second was written. Now, as Timothy had stayed behind when Paul went from Thessalonica to Athens,¹ and rejoined Paul at Corinth, the indications seem very strong that both letters were written while Paul was at Corinth. This is now the general supposition; and this would fix the date for both, according to the chronology followed here, at about A.D. 53.

Next came, probably, the epistle to the Galatians, though the proof in this case is less clear. If Gal. iv. 13, means, as it probably does, “Ye know how . . . I preached the gospel to you *the first time*,” Paul must have been twice in Galatia when this was written. This would place the time after Acts xviii. 23, the second mention of Galatia in Acts. In this case, Galatians was probably written in Ephesus, about A.D. 56. We must remember, however, that, as there is no mention in Acts of any churches of Galatia, it is an open question whether the Roman province by that name is not meant here;² in which case the second visit to Galatia would be that in Acts xvi. 1-5, and this epistle might be the earliest of all,—perhaps A.D. 52.³

Paul’s next letters were those to the Corinthians, only two of which, out of three or four, remain.⁴ The first was written from Ephesus,⁵ just after sending Timothy to Corinth with a letter which has been lost.⁶ This corresponds with the last part of Paul’s long stay in Ephesus, according to Acts,⁷ and must have been about A.D. 57.

The second was written after leaving Ephesus,⁸ and crossing into Macedonia;⁹ that is, about A.D. 58.

When the epistle to the Romans was written, Paul was on the point of leaving, to carry contributions from Macedonia and

¹ Acts xvii. 15.

² See Lesson ix.

³ Compare Hausrath, p. 267.

⁴ Lesson ix.

⁵ 1 Cor. xvi. 8, 19.

⁶ 1 Cor. iv. 17; xvi. 10; v. 9.

⁷ Acts. xix. 22.

⁸ 2 Cor. i. 8; ii. 12, 13; vii. 5; ix. 2, 4; also 1 Cor. xvi. 5.

⁹ Acts xx. 1, 2.

Greece to "the poor saints at Jerusalem;" after which he hoped to go both to Rome and to Spain.¹ This points to the second visit to Greece, where he spent three months, probably in Corinth, just before his last visit to Jerusalem.² To be sure, the writer of Acts gives quite another reason for Paul's journey to Jerusalem,³ and says nothing whatever about Corinth. But Paul's words are explicit, and as he had evidently planned a third visit to Corinth,⁴ and the epistle to Romans could not well have been written at any other time, we conclude that it was sent from Corinth⁵ about A.D. 59.

There remain only the three later epistles, Colossians, Ephesians, Philippians, with the private letter to Philemon. As all of these were written in captivity,⁶ we infer that Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians date from the imprisonment at Caesarea, about A.D. 60 and 61, and Philippians from Rome,⁷ about A.D. 63.

We have, then, as our sources of authority for Paul's life, the book of Acts and ten letters from Paul himself.

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QUESTIONS.

1. From what writings do we get our knowledge of St. Paul, and what is the best authority?
2. Who is commonly supposed to have written the Acts, and what is known about him?
3. What reasons are

¹ Rom. xv. 24-28; also 1 Cor. xvi. 1-7.

² Acts. xx. 3, 16, 22.

³ Acts xx. 16.

⁴ 2 Cor. xii. 14; xiii. 1.

⁵ Compare Rom. xvi. 1.

⁶ Col. iv. 10, 18; Eph. vi. 20; Phil. i. 13-16.

⁷ Phil. i. 13; iv. 22.

there for accepting this theory ? 4. Should you suppose the book to have been written by a companion of Paul, and if not, why ? 5. Mention instances which show want of familiarity with events of Paul's life. 6. Mention instances where the Acts and Epistles contradict each other. 7. What reasons are there for considering the Acts a compilation ? 8. Does it destroy its value to consider it so ? 9. Point out passages in which the writer speaks in the first person, and tell how this is to be explained. 10. What connection may Luke have had with the book, if he did not write the whole ? 11. What charge is sometimes made against the writer, and how much ground do you think there is for it ? 12. How early was Luke called the author of the Acts ? 13. What seems to you the historical value of the book ? 14. If either the Acts or Paul's epistles were to be destroyed, which could we spare best ?

15. How many epistles are ascribed to Paul in the New Testament ? 16. Which of these are doubtful, and why ? 17. Is it strange that some letters should be incorrectly attributed to him ? 18. What is there to show when and where any epistle was written, and how sure can we be in any case ? 19. When were the two epistles to the Thessalonians written, and how do we determine this ? 20. When the epistle to Galatians, and how do we know ? 21. The First Corinthians ? 22. The Second Corinthians ? 23. Romans ? 24. Philemon, Colossians, and Ephesians ? 25. Philippians ? 26. Mention all the epistles of Paul in their chronological order, with the date of each.

CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE.

A.D.		A.D.
34	Saul's Conversion. Three years in and around Damascus.	EPISTLES.
37	Visit to Jerusalem. Eleven preparatory years in and around Tarsus.	
48	Saul joins the Christians at Antioch.	
“	First missionary journey ; Cyprus and Asia Minor.	
51	Conference at Jerusalem.	
“	Second journey ; Asia Minor and Greece.	53. 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
54	Third journey ; chiefly in Ephesus and Corinth.	56. Galatians. 57. 1 Corinthians. 58. 2 Corinthians. 59. Romans.
59	Last visit to Jerusalem, and imprisonment at Cæsarea.	60. Colossians. 60. Philemon. 60. Ephesians.
61	Voyage to Rome.	
62	Two years in Rome.	63. Philippians.
64	Paul's death.	

